

WFP Lebanon  
Food Security Outcome Monitoring  
Round 1: January 2016



**World Food Programme**



# Highlights

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The first round of food security outcome monitoring (FSOM) concluded after consulting 579 households, including both assisted and non-assisted beneficiaries, as well as 18 focus group discussions (FGD).

From January to March 2016, WFP assisted 588,431 vulnerable Syrian refugees and 20,080 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon through e-cards and cash transfers respectively.

In January 2016, assisted households recorded better food consumption scores than non-assisted households. 59 percent of assisted households had acceptable food consumption scores compared to 49 percent of non-assisted households.

The coping strategy index (CSI) of assisted beneficiaries remained high in January at 18.5. Non-assisted households scored even higher at 20.1.

Assisted households resorted to using less food-based coping strategies than non-assisted households due to the WFP assistance provided, in line with FCS results. Nevertheless, refugee households continued to rely on less preferred foods, reduced the number of portions and quantities of meals as well as borrowing food to meet their basic food needs.

Assisted households had overall higher expenditures (USD 546) in comparison to non-assisted households (USD 526) in the same month.

Expenditure share analysis showed that for both groups, food was the main expenditure (59 percent) followed by rent (17 percent) and health (9 percent).

Assisted households ranked their overall satisfaction with WFP assistance and programming as 7.2/10.

Both assisted and non-assisted households showed similar results in terms of modality preference with around half preferring vouchers/e-cards and around 40 percent preferring cash.

# Introduction

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. Since the outbreak of violence in Syria in 2011 more than four million individuals have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. WFP's regional emergency operation 200433 was launched in July 2012 to respond to the crisis in those neighbouring countries including Lebanon. Within this framework and during the first quarter of 2016, WFP provided food assistance to 588,431 vulnerable Syrian refugees and 20,080 PRS in Lebanon through e-cards and cash transfers respectively. Additionally, WFP continues supporting the Government to strengthen its social safety net programme - the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) - which provides food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese people affected by the crisis.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit at WFP Lebanon has been monitoring outcomes, outputs and implementation processes since the beginning of the operation. In 2016, FSOM was implemented to measure food security outcome trends over time among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. This exercise will be conducted on a quarterly basis. The first round was conducted in January 2016 and the data collection was completed in the second week of February.

## Methodology

FSOM presents a shift from the regular post-distribution monitoring (PDM) as it allows for comparisons between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Those comparisons help to inform programme adjustments and decision-making. The questionnaire included close-ended questions to evaluate food security, expenditure and processes.

Quarterly FSOM will focus on the following key questions:

1. How is the food security situation among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries evolving over time?
2. What are the outcomes of food assistance and is WFP achieving its targets?
3. Is WFP targeting the right people?

4. What are the impacts of changes in assistance value? Is there a need to review transfer values?
5. What are the external factors potentially impacting food security outcomes?

A random sampling approach was used to select a representative sample of assisted and non-assisted households using the UNHCR registration list. A total of 575 refugee households were interviewed; 325 assisted and 250 non-assisted households. Assisted households are Syrian refugee households registered with UNHCR and assisted by WFP, while the non-assisted households are Syrian refugee households that are registered with UNHCR but are not receiving WFP assistance. The original sample was 500 surveys however the sample was increased for the assisted beneficiaries by 30 percent, a total of 75 surveys with assisted households all over Lebanon. This was done in order for the sample to be comparable following the targeting and to cater for the results which may have led to the exclusion of some of the visited households. Beneficiaries were contacted before the visit, informed about the FSOM and its aim. Interviews were only conducted with those interested after having provided their consent.

The FSOM survey was coupled with a qualitative component of FGDs conducted in January with the dual purpose of triangulating quantitative FSOM findings and providing the BCG Cash Study with a qualitative baseline. 18 gender sensitive focus groups were conducted around the country in parallel with the household survey. Two FGDs (one male and one female) were conducted in each district. The groups were divided between females and males in order to ensure privacy.

A main challenge of the FSOM is the difficulty in comparing the FSOM and the PDM due to the change in methodology and the change in the food security module. In addition, assisted and non-assisted households visited were reluctant to answer FSOM questionnaires due to the several ongoing targeting efforts and the number of exclusions that took place in 2015 which might have impacted the beneficiary feedback.

# Beneficiary characteristics

Several beneficiary characteristics of assisted and non-assisted groups were collected and analysed through the FSOM. While the assisted households included more female headed than those the non-assisted, results also indicate that the average household size of those assisted is more than the non-assisted. Different sources of income as well as varying external assistance were recorded. Below is a summary of the findings:

Analysis of household sizes shows that the assisted groups have larger household sizes than the non-assisted groups. Given that assistance is capped at five individuals per households, the results indicate that on average at least one vulnerable beneficiary per household is not receiving assistance.

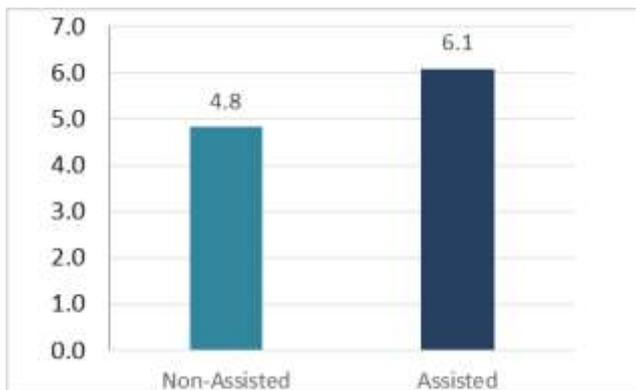


Figure 1: household size by assisted and non-assisted groups. Source: *WFP FSOM January 2016*

Data by sex of household head shows that both the assisted and non-assisted groups have predominantly male headed households; nevertheless the assisted group has more female headed as compared to the non-assisted group. In the assisted group, almost half of the female headed households have less than five individuals and are thus receiving full assistance. Nevertheless, they remain more vulnerable than male headed households due to their inability to provide for their families.

Main sources of income for the assisted and the non-assisted groups were reported as follows. 60 percent of the assisted beneficiaries **relied on WFP's e-card** as a main source of income and on credit and borrowing (20 percent) as a second source. Through the FGDs, it was shown that half of the male beneficiaries

experienced decreased job opportunities during this period.

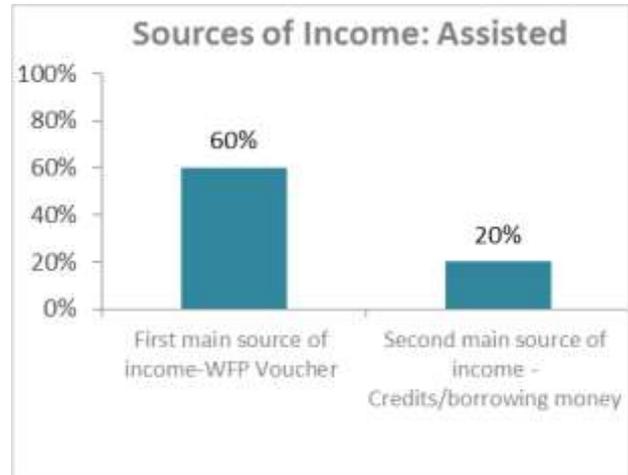


Figure 2: sources of income for assisted households. Source: *WFP FSOM January 2016*

On the other hand, the non-assisted had to resort to unskilled labour (52 percent) opportunities to generate a main income source and used credit and borrowing as their secondary source of income (56 percent). Out of the non-assisted, 69 percent reported to have no third main source of income.

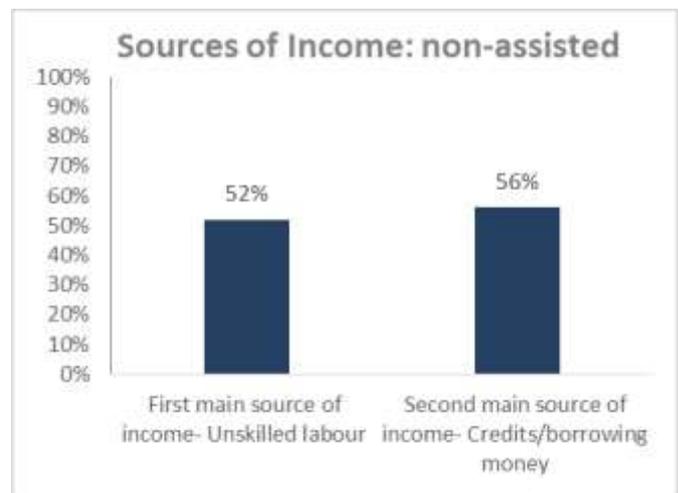


Figure 3: sources of income for non-assisted households. Source: *WFP FSOM January 2016*

In the assisted group, female headed households reported relying on WFP assistance and cash from other organisations for income while male headed households reported relying on WFP e-cards and credit for income.

When comparing education levels, the majority of households visited reported only reaching primary education. The non-assisted group reached higher levels of education than the assisted. Those with less educated household heads and higher household sizes are more likely to be targeted with assistance. Analyses on other assistance received by households show that 70 percent of WFP assisted households received other forms of assistance. On the other hand, only 21 percent of the WFP non-assisted households received other forms of assistance.

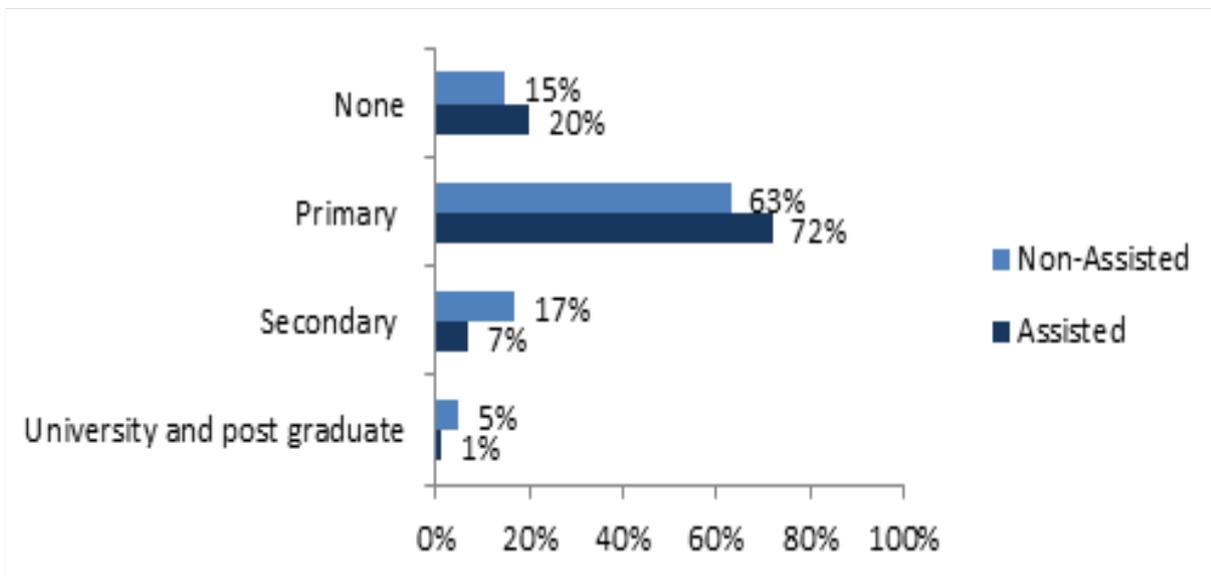


Figure 4: education levels of assisted and non-assisted groups. Source: *WFP FSOM January 2016*

WFP assisted groups received shelter, multipurpose cash and other forms of assistance such as fuel, showing that WFP and other agencies are targeting the most vulnerable beneficiaries. On the other hand, the non-assisted group receives a smaller share of other forms of assistance and that is specifically for child specific needs followed by multipurpose cash. WFP remains the main source of food assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

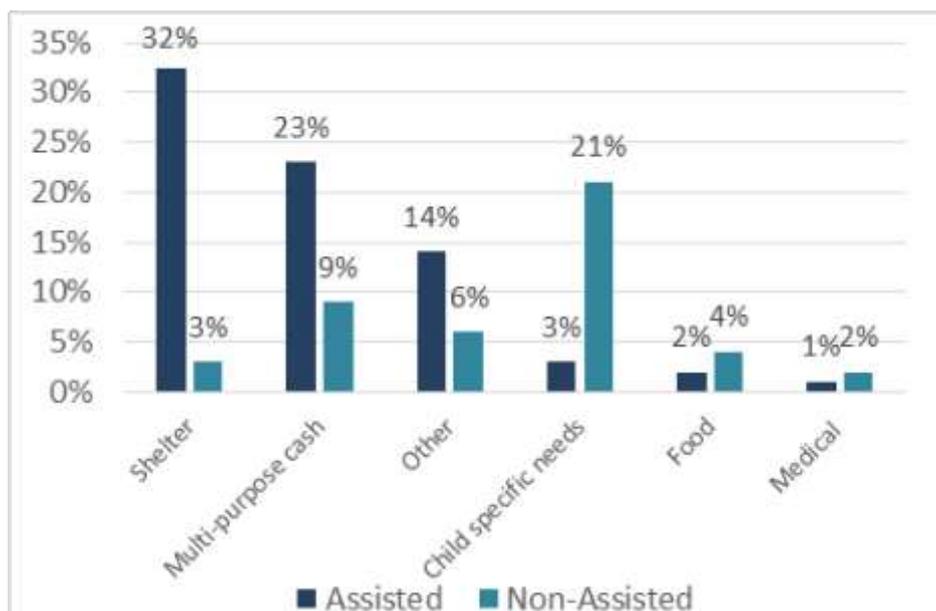


Figure 5: other assistance provided to refugees. Source: *WFP FSOM January 2016*

# Main food security outcomes

*Main food security outcomes measured by WFP were analysed, including food consumption scores, dietary diversity scores and coping strategy indexes. They confirmed that assisted populations fared better off than non-assisted.*

Food consumption over seven days was assessed among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The food consumption score of households receiving WFP assistance was higher than the food consumption score of the non-assisted. After the stability of the voucher value at USD 21.6 and the continuation of capping at five individuals, 59 percent of the assisted households recorded having acceptable Food consumption score while only 49 percent recorded having acceptable Food consumption score in the non-assisted group; a ten point difference (Fig. 1). Beneficiaries reported during focus group discussions that in the past year, reductions in assistance levels as well as capping had severe effects on the households. All beneficiaries interviewed reported increased debt and deteriorating health conditions coupled with a deterioration of food consumption.

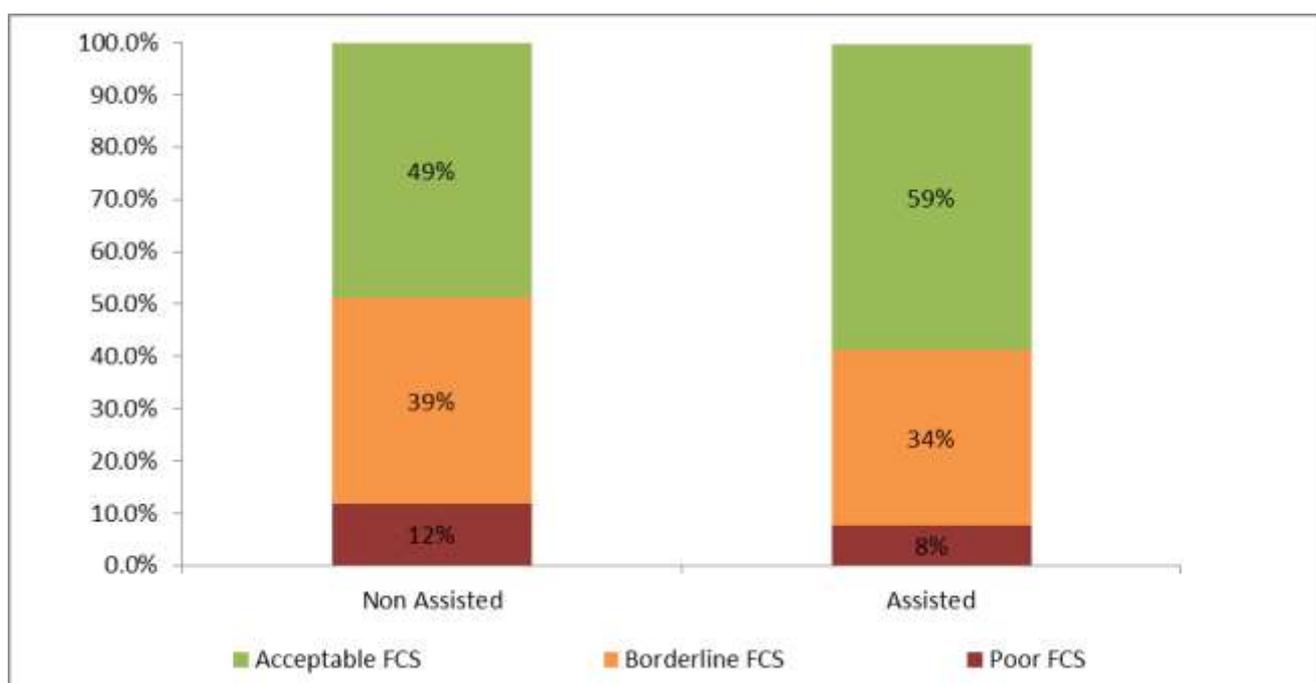


Figure 6: food consumption trends between assisted and non-assisted in Q1 2016. Source: WFP FSOM January 2016

Female headed-households have a lower average food consumption score (45) as compared to male headed (48) as the majority of them relied on WFP and cash assistance as the main sources of income.

Calculation of the average dietary diversity score (ADDS) shows that both assisted and non-assisted groups had similar dietary diversity (5.5 and 5.4 food groups per week respectively). Looking at the consumption by food group shows that both groups consume a varied diet which includes all food groups. The assisted had slightly higher food consumption in all food groups except vegetables. This is line with the assisted group having overall better FCS than the non-assisted.

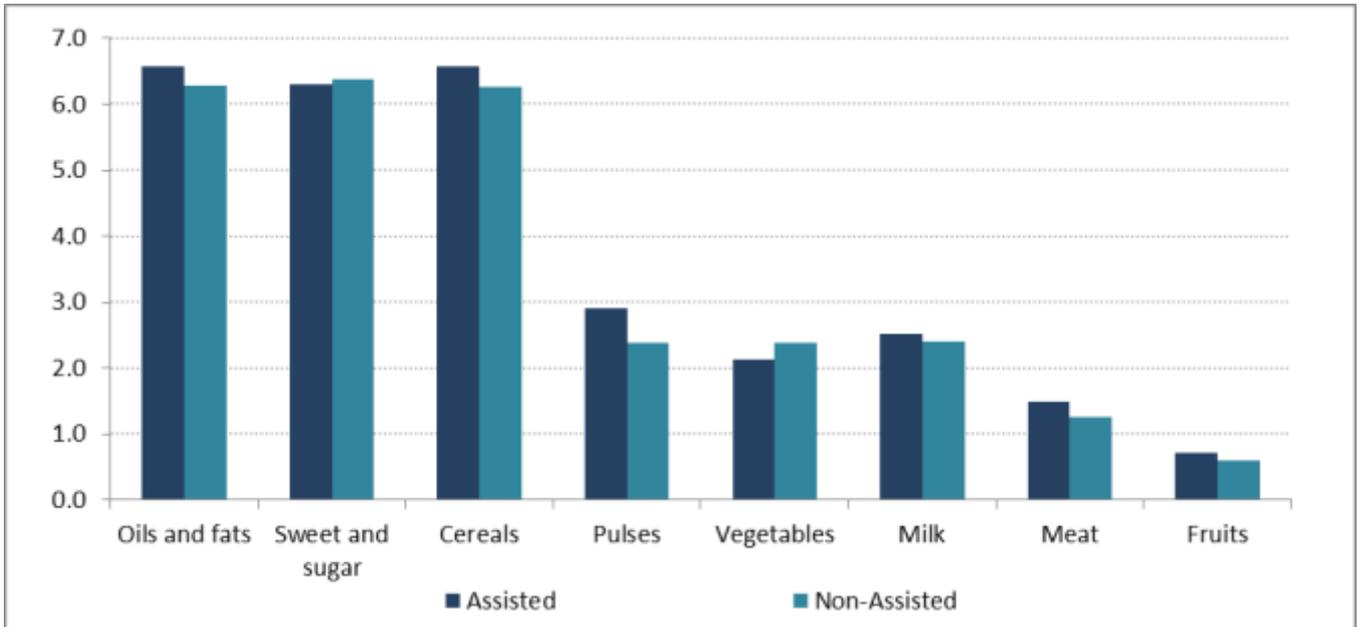


Figure 7: average number of days each food group was consumed (assisted and non-assisted). Source: WFP FSOM January 2016

Results from the FGDs complement the results from the FSOM survey where beneficiaries reported that in January and with the continuation in the reduction of assistance, beneficiaries were not able to purchase as much vegetables, meat and chicken as in the previous months. Assisted beneficiaries also reported the increase in use of coping strategies mainly consumption of less meal and buying only essential food items.

The coping strategy index (CSI) is an indicator of the coping mechanisms applied to deal with lack of food or money to buy food. The CSI remains high in January 2016 at 18.6. Figure 7 shows the proportion of people who adopted each coping mechanism in order to deal with food shortage. Both, the assist-

ed and non-assisted beneficiaries have had to rely on less preferred food, reduce number of portion and number of meal as well as borrow food to cope. The CSI of the non-assisted group was higher and stood at 20.1 meaning that the non-assisted are employing more food based coping strategies than the assisted. When looking at the strategies employed, non-assisted group employed each strategy more than the assisted group. Reduce quantities consumed by adults so children can eat is the only strategy that is consumed less by the non-assisted than the assisted and that may be related to the non-assisted group having a smaller percentage of children between the age of 0-5 (60 percent) than the assisted (70 percent).

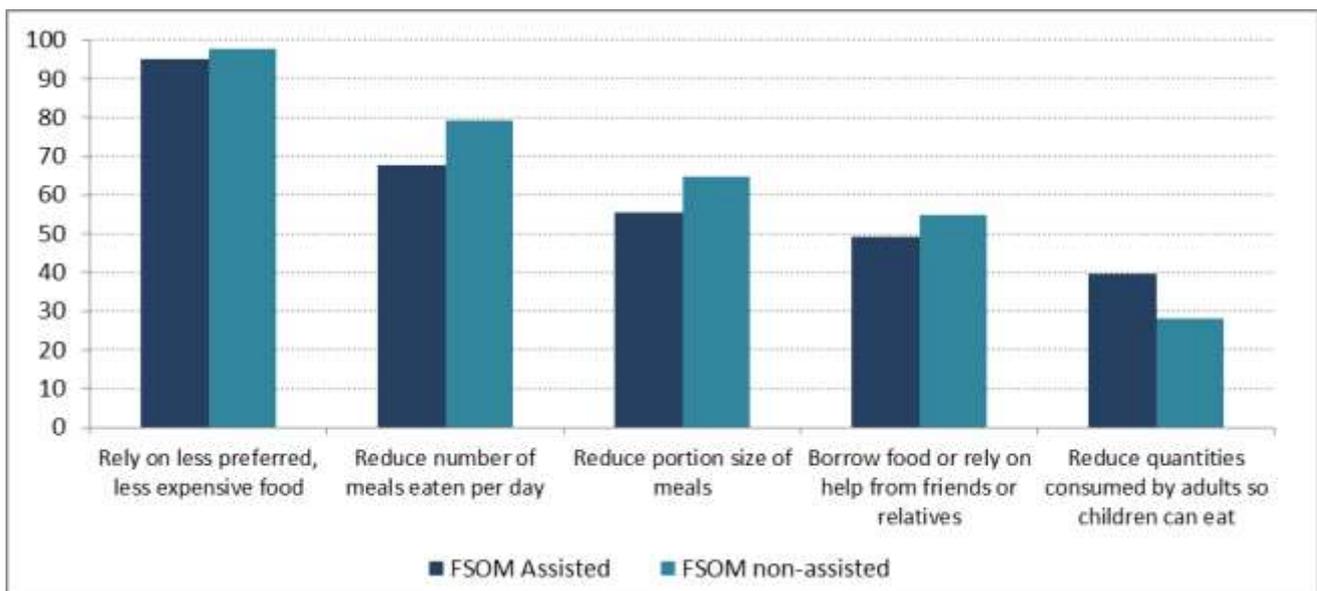


Figure 8: proportion of the assisted and non-assisted groups adopting each of the food-based coping strategies in January 2016. Source: WFP FSOM January 2016

Expenditures of both assisted and non-assisted beneficiaries were measured as a proxy for income. The estimated amount spent by the assisted household during the last 30 days in total was USD 546 out of which were around USD 240 on food (including the WFP cash and voucher) (44 percent) followed by USD 107 on rent (20 percent). On the other hand, non-assisted households had slightly lower expenditures overall. The estimated amount spent by the non-assisted household during the last 30 days in total was USD 526 where the non-assisted HH spent on average USD 212 on food (40 percent) followed by USD 132 on rent (25 percent). Both the assisted and non-assisted groups spend at least 40 percent of their money on food.

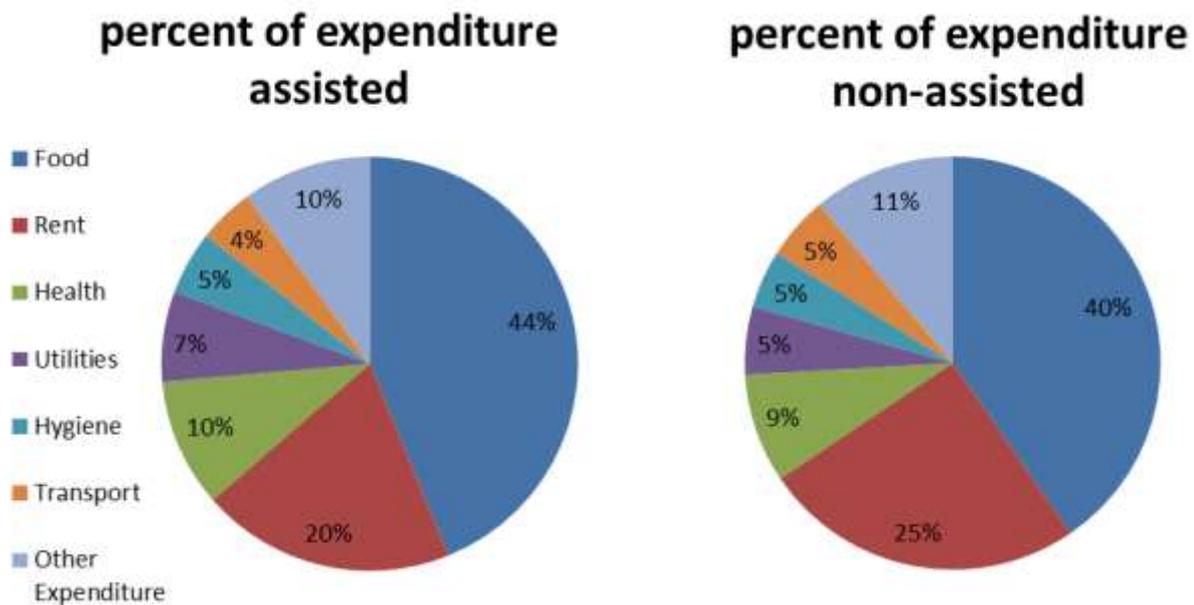


Figure 9: monthly expenditure share for assisted and non-assisted groups. Source: WFP FSOM January 2016

Expenditure share analyses shows that for both groups, food (59 percent) and rent (17 percent) are the top two expenditures followed by health (9 percent) and utilities (3 percent), with assisted beneficiaries spending less on rent (20 percent) than the non-assisted (25 percent). Assisted beneficiaries in FGDs were asked to rank their basic needs and the results show that the most important priority is rent followed by food and health. Nevertheless expenditure data shows higher expenditure on food than on rent meaning that WFP assistance is allowing households to cover their food needs as a basic need. In terms of debts, the majority of the assisted (89 percent) and non-assisted (91 percent) households reported having debts. On average, the non-assisted household reported having around USD 907 worth of debt, on the other hand the assisted had lower amount of debt at around USD 682. Results indicate that the amount of debts accumulated by non-assisted is due to their inability to cover for their needs. On the other hand, the assisted group having received assistance is able to rely less on debts.

# Other indicators

Other indicators were collected through the FSOM. Results indicate a relatively high satisfaction with WFP programme even though there is a clear sense that assistance could increase. Decisions over the use of e-vouchers are primarily made by women regardless of whether the household is headed by a female or a male. Vouchers are clearly the preferred modality of assistance among both the assisted and non-assisted.

A key component to all monitoring activities is to ensure beneficiary feedback is regularly obtained. Interviewed beneficiaries were asked to rate their satisfaction with WFP assistance on a scale of 1-10 in regard to how the assistance was provided, the quantity and the overall satisfaction. Beneficiaries reported that their overall satisfaction with the programme was rated at 7.2/10. Generally, lower satisfaction was reported with the quantity of assistance and that is due to the reduced voucher value and capping that has been ongoing since 2015.

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Intra-household decision making amongst households receiving WFP assistance was also evaluated through a gender lens. Of the assisted households interviewed, 60 percent reported that women are the primary decision-makers regarding the use of WFP assistance, such as

what, where and when to buy, whereas 13 percent of households reported that men alone made a decision on the use of WFP assistance. In half of the male headed households, women were the decision makers over the use of e-cards.

All beneficiaries were asked about their modality preference when receiving assistance from WFP. They were asked to choose between preferring food, cash or vouchers or a mix of cash and vouchers. Around 54 percent of those assisted reported preferring to receive in the voucher modality while 43 percent reported a preference for cash and another 8 percent reported preferring a mixture of voucher and cash. Non-assisted households reported similar modality preference to those assisted, with around 52 percent preferring vouchers and some 33 percent preferring cash. Out those who prefer cash and voucher mix in the assisted and non-assisted groups combined, the majority declared that they want assistance as 50 percent cash and 50 percent voucher.

98 percent of assisted beneficiaries did not face safety problems either going to WFP programme sites, at WFP programme sites, or going back from WFP programme sites. This indicates that the programme is safe and the operating environment does not pose safety problems to beneficiaries receiving WFP assistance.

On the other hand, around 5 percent of the assisted individuals experienced issues relating to their safety within the last three months in Lebanon. That was mainly verbal harassment from their neighbours or the host community. Another 3.5 percent of the non-assisted also reported facing verbal harassment during their last three months in Lebanon.

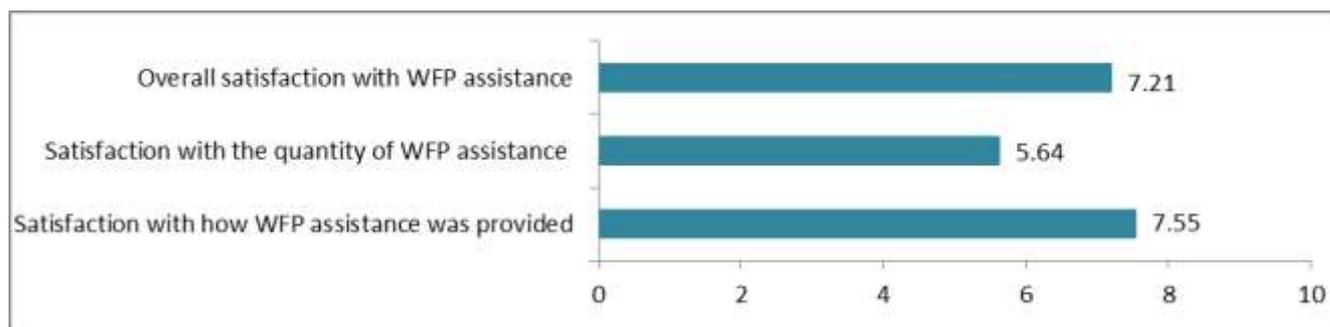


Figure 10: satisfaction rates. Source: WFP FSOM January 2016

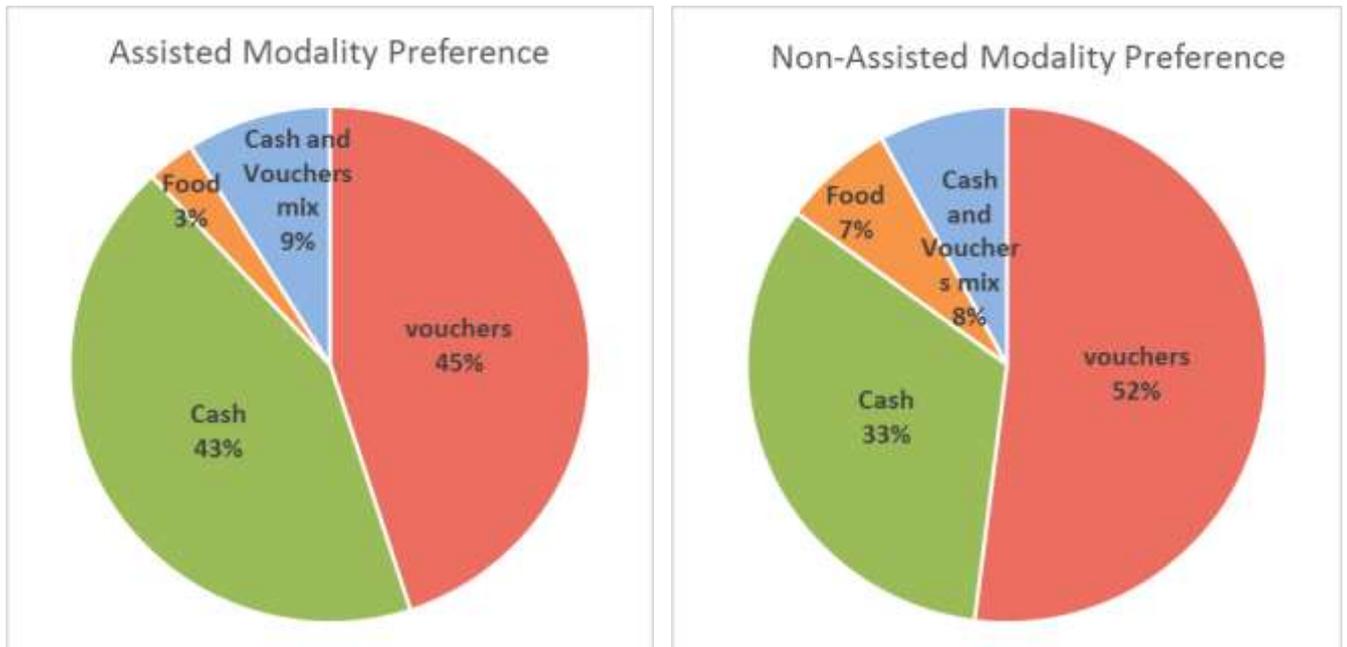


Figure 11: modality preference for assisted and non-assisted households in Q1. Source: *WFP FSOM January 2016*

## Initial conclusion

Food remains the main expenditure component for both the assisted and non-assisted households where both groups are able to meet their food need; with the assisted households faring better than non-assisted households due to the WFP food assistance provided.

WFP assistance has allowed the assisted beneficiaries to meet their basic food needs better than the non-assisted. Further monitoring of the non-assisted is required to better understand their food security situation as initial results indicate their food security situation is worse than those assisted. A review of the targeting methodology and criteria needs to take place to ensure WFP is supporting all vulnerable beneficiaries.

Throughout the monitored period, the assisted group continued to receive only 70 percent of the voucher value (USD 21.6) capped at five individuals per case. Results indicate that the situation deteriorated during this period and there is a need to rally funds for further support to the most vulnerable refugees and to provide full value vouchers without any form of capping.

Beneficiary satisfaction with the quantity of WFP assistance remains low and further efforts should be invested in filling the gaps identified by beneficiaries.



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