

ESSN Task Force Izmir Minutes

Objective

To provide an update on ESSN (WFP/TRC), presentation on Q2 Market Monitoring Bulletin (WFP), presentation on Beneficiary Communications in the ESSN (WFP/TRC), presentation on CCTE (UNICEF/TRC), presentation on TRC Izmir Branch Office Activities (TRC Izmir Branch) and AOB.

Date of meeting

03 October 2017
13:30 - 15:30

Location

TRC Izmir Branch, Izmir
Sehit Nevres Bulvari No:3 1st floor, Kizilay Is
Merkezi, Izmir/Turkey

1. Update of ESSN (WFP/TRC)

- The Co-Chairs World Food Programme (WFP) and Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) provided an update on the ESSN to date noting that as of 3 October, a total of 347,972 applications were registered; 6,207 applications were not assessed; 179,091 applications were deemed eligible and 162,677 applications were ineligible. Approximately, 38,65% of the applications were registered by 18 TRC Service Centres. A total of 1,010,894 beneficiaries received ESSN assistance in September (48.93% male/51.07% female). Majority of the beneficiaries are Syrian nationals (91.2%) followed by the Iraqi (6.3%) and Afghan (1.9%) nationals.
- ESSN reached more than 1 million people in 10 months. Eligibility Age breakdown of the beneficiaries as follows: 0-17 (61.59%), 18-59 (35.65%) and >60 (2.76%). Eligibility criteria breakdown shows us that there are still problems to obtain disability health report and the issue is being discussed at inter-agency level for further advocacy.
- First periodic top-up was made in August 2017.
- Inclusion rate is 52% (this figure is increased since June due to New Demographic Criteria Implementation). Average household size is 5.97.
- WFP and TRC teams verify the application figures coming from the MoFSP database on a monthly basis before the cash transfer. For the August payment, totally 185 HHs have been identified ineligible with the applications. The number cumulatively increased to 277 before September payment.
- In Aegean Region, majority of the applications are from Izmir, Denizli and Balikesir. In Izmir province, majority of the ESSN HHs are from Bornova, Karabaglar and Konak. As of 14 September according to the DGMM figures, 116,878 Syrians were registered under Temporary Protection in Izmir.
- In total 169,388 cards have been uploaded with September payment. 15,344 new cards will be distributed nationwide in September. The distribution started on 21 September and 515 new cards have been distributed in Izmir.
- Based on the information provided by WFP Izmir Field Office, field monitoring visits are on-going with the following focus on:
 - Joint monitoring missions between WFP and TRC in all districts in the Aegean region
 - Meetings with key stakeholders (Kaymakams, government officials, etc.)
 - Identification and reporting of protection and referral related cases
 - Regular focus group discussions with beneficiaries on different thematic topics in order to better understand and respond to their needs.
- Follow up and next steps:
 - As of late Aug, TRC and WFP started to report cases with ID card/registration issues to DGMM on a regular basis for further follow ups and possible solutions. TRC Call Centre 168 is the main channel for the refugees with registration issues to report to.
 - First quarterly top-ups were made in August 2017.
 - The household verification SoP, SASF pilot SoP and system changes to be finalized in October with TUBITAK and MoFSP. Once they are finalized, there will be dedicated sessions at the upcoming ESSN TF meetings.
 - By October, there will be re-introduction of Turkish language option to Halkbank ATMs for the non-Arabic speaker beneficiaries.

2. Presentation Q2 Market Monitoring Bulletin (WFP)

- Purpose of the study is to ensure beneficiaries are provided with most appropriate transfer value and modality. As well as to advocate for programmatic changes when needed.
- Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) is the cost of goods and services to meet basic needs. Its key functions are calculating gap analysis (what people need versus what they can afford), informing transfer value calculation and monitoring market prices of MEB goods and services.
- MEB consists of food, rent, utilities, non-food items, health, education, communication and transportation expenses.
- Cover 8 regions where 84% of the refugees are located. The selected regions all have a significant population of refugees, and are regions for which data is available.
- Turkey's inflation eased in June, after skyrocketing in April. Fresh fruit and vegetable prices contributed significantly to the decrease in consumer prices.
- The GDP grew by 5% in Q1. Key drivers of the quarterly growth were exports, construction investments and public consumption. It is very likely that economic recovery will gain momentum going forward, and GDP growth might be even stronger in Q2 thanks to government incentives.
- Average MEB is 1,945 TL for a household of six, or 324 TL per capita.
- Rent explains a significant (~66%) proportion of the difference in the cost of MEB in Istanbul (max MEB during reporting period) and Hatay-Kahramanmaraş-Osmaniye (min MEB during reporting period).
- ~0.8% increase in the cost of MEB over the last quarter, ~10.4% increase in the cost of MEB over the last year.
- Data source: Secondary data (Turkish Statistical Institute). Caveat: Actual prices refugees are facing with might be lower.

3. Presentation on Beneficiary Communication in the ESSN (WFP/TRC)

- SMS message is the main way to communicate with the applicants after the application stage. There are 29 agreed SMS messages to inform about applicant's eligibility status (initial of where this might change and why), discrepancies (reduced assistance or ineligibility due to error), card distribution info, card upload, ESSN communication channels. 1,228,190 SMS messages have been sent so far.
- Over 1.6 million printed materials (leaflets and posters) are printed in 4 languages (Arabic, Turkish, English and Farsi) and distributed.
- 23 (plus 1 team leader) operators speaking 6 languages (Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Kurdish, Turkish & English) are working in the TRC call center. 322,621 calls received as of mid-September and average waiting time is less than 2 minutes. It was clarified that there are both male and female operators.
- Callers can check reasons for ineligibility with operators and be advised on way forward.
- As of September 2017, there are 53,077 followers on Facebook. Majority of the users are men (80%). The comments and questions are responded based by using agreed FAQs. Users are asked to contact 168 for more specific feedback on individual circumstances.
- ESSN Website launched at the end of May, visited 21.848 times. The website is in Turkish English and Arabic and being translated into Farsi.
- According to CVME data from 120 non-applicants out of 600 interviewed, 5% of non-applicants stated 'lack of awareness of the ESSN. Our idea is to find a way to reach those who have been heard about the programme.
- The service provider for the SMS messages doesn't provide any report on SMS failures. Therefore we cannot find out how many of the SMS messages are received. This is something that we are following up on, as we know that numbers can be cancelled by the phone provider if the account is not regularly topped up, which may well be the case for many ESSN applicants.
- Presentation on 'refugee information channels' survey results: Plan to increase survey numbers targetted at non-Arabic speakers in order to understand if this group uses different information channels. No partners present were reaching out to communities through television.

4. Presentation on CCTE (UNICEF/TRC)

- All children who are accepted to the programme will receive the 100 TL additional payment for the beginning of every school semester (September and January) regardless of the conditional on regular school attendance.
- TEC students can also benefit from CCTE program with the same modalities. But, due to YOBIS-ISAIS integration which could be provided in the mid of June and some technical problems later on experienced until the end of July-August, only a very few TEC students were able to benefit from the programme for the July payment. But since the technical issues have been solved, for the September payment, we expect more TEC students included into the programme.
- Brochures in Arabic, Turkish and English were printed and shared to multiple locations such as SASFs, TRC service centers, community centers, TECs and MoNE provincial directorates. FAQ in Turkish, English and Arabic languages is

prepared and is being revised as per the feedback coming from the partners and the latest version will be shared. Afghani language is not available for now.

- As of September 2017, 136,523 children are entitled for payment in 80 provinces. Most of the beneficiaries are located in Istanbul (11.76%), Hatay (11.55%) and Sanliurfa (9.53%). Most of them are attending the primary schools.
- Total number of cardholders are 76,143.
- Payments to beneficiaries are made in every two months (Jan-Mar-May-Jul-Sep-Nov) in line with the national CCTE programme. There are no plans to make the payments by monthly.
- Based on the application and rejected numbers pulled out from CCTE system, the reasons why the 5 % of CCTE applications were rejected might be based on the registration issues such as they don't meet the programme criteria,—families register in one place and then they leave the town and don't change the registration records.
- Based on the 168 Call Center Statistics, 68% of the calls are for the information request, 30% of them are for the questions regarding the card and only 2% of them are for the complaints.
- Regarding to question on increasing payment amounts, the CCTE for refugees is completely in line with the national program in terms of implementation arrangements from eligibility criteria to individual payment amounts. And, as per our knowledge, there is no any plan in national program to make an increment in individual amounts. However, the CCTE for refugees is providing additional 100TL in every school semester to compensate the school expenses in the beginning of the school semesters.
- Regarding to the question on the difficulties reported on the field in application processes for TEC students: as mentioned in the presentation, the integration between YOBIS and ISAIS has been provided in mid-June, and there have been some other technical issues later. But the problems have been fixed and the applications for TEC students can be proceeded flawlessly. But if there are still families reporting problems in this front, they have to make sure that the registration in YOBIS has been made with the proper ID number starting with "99" and was entered into the system correctly.

5. Presentation on TRC Izmir Branch Office Activities (TRC Izmir)

- TRC Izmir branch has been operating since 1911. The branch performs the following activities:
 - Trainings (First-Aid Trainings, First-Aid Train the Trainer Training, Preparation for Disaster Training)
 - Aid Activities (Hot Soup Project, providing assistance to refugees and providing scholarships to students)
 - European Volunteering Service
 - Eurodesk Activities
 - Voluntary Services
 - Public Relations Activities
- Since 2016, the branch is regularly attending meetings organized by the Governorship of Izmir and the UNHCR.
- In 2016 and 2017, food and non-food aids were distributed to refugees in various neighbourhoods.
- The branch participated in various EU projects.

6. AOB

- Next ESSN TF Izmir meeting will be held on Friday, 03 Nov. Venue and time to be confirmed.
- Please remember to send any issues/challenges observed with as much detail as possible (location, date, etc.) to the ESSN TF.

Attachments:

1. ESSN Task Force Izmir Presentation
2. Presentation on Q2 Market Monitoring Bulletin
3. Presentation on Beneficiary Communication in the ESSN
4. Presentation on Update on CCTE for Refugees
5. Presentation TRC Izmir Branch Office Activities (TRC Izmir)