

ESSN Task Force Istanbul Minutes

Objective	To provide an update on ESSN and current issues to date (WFP/TRC), TRC Barriers to Access Survey (TRC), Cash Gap Analysis read out (WFP), Market Monitoring Report (WFP), Post Assessment Baseline and CCTE (UNICEF/TRC)		
Date of meeting	20 July 2017 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Location	TRC Bagcilar Community Center, Goztepe Mahallesi, Orhangazi Caddesi, No: 1, Bagcilar/Istanbul

1. Update of ESSN

- The Co-Chairs World Food Programme (WFP) and Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) provided an update of the ESSN to date noting that as of 17 July, a total of 315,142 applications were registered; 5,510 applications were not assessed; 151,688 applications were deemed eligible and 157,944 applications were ineligible. Approximately, 114,023 applications were registered by 18 TRC Service Centres (37,83 % nationwide). A total of 685,577 beneficiaries are on the ESSN programme as of end of June (48,43% male/51,57% female). Majority of the beneficiaries are Syrian nationals (628,004) followed by the Iraqi nationals (41,276).
- In Marmara region, majority of the applications are from Istanbul, Bursa and Kocaeli provinces.
- Three TRC Service Centers are available in Istanbul (Bagcilar, Fatih and Umraniye) for the ESSN applications. 3,859 applications have been received in these centers as of 17 July.
- In July payments, 142,953 HHs/862,467 individuals will receive ESSN assistance.
- 228,958 calls received by the TRC Call Center operators as of 17 July. Most of the calls are received from Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Istanbul, Hatay and Adana.
- New criteria change
 - i. Reduce dependency ratio threshold to equal to 1.5 and above (was above 1.5)
 - ii. Reduce disability threshold to 1 member (was 2) is effective in June.

New leaflets and posters started to be distributed starting from mid-July in English, Turkish, Arabic and Farsi languages. They are also published on social media.
- First quarterly top-up will be made in August 2017.

2. Barriers to access survey (TRC)

- This survey was conducted with 3295 HHs in 18 TRC SCs' M&E Teams between 6 June and 7 July 2017. During the survey, TRC M&E Teams visited 104 informal houses. All interviews are conducted face to face.
- Nationalities of the refugees were mostly Syrian followed by Iraqi and Turkmens.
- Majority of them were Arabic speakers (97%) with Turkish as a second language (41%).
- Awareness rate of ESSN is 91% and 89% them know how to apply to the programme.
- DGMM: Almost 13% of them are waiting for the appointment date. Noting that in some districts they have to wait for 6 months and more.
- MERNIS: Informal housing issue is preventing them to be registered in MERNIS.
- DHR: Disability Health Report Stuck Reason is another barrier to apply to the program. The rate is low.
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- For further details please see the attached presentation.

3. Cash Gap Analysis Read Out (WFP)

- Information on the Cash Gap Analysis Workshop
 - The first day focused on barriers to accessing the ESSN, including registration to DGMM, registration with civil registry, etc. The second day looked at targeting and programming to address those vulnerable who are not eligible for the ESSN.
 - **Registration:** partners highlighted 10 key provinces to focus on local-level advocacy. The Protection Working Group will collect feedback on DGMM/PDMM challenges and backlogs, as well as feed into the spreadsheet on

local-level advocacy being done or to be done in the 10 provinces. The local level advocacy will feed into the high level advocacy that UNHCR continues to do.

- **Informal Housing:** MERNIS applications will be received through the Service Centers. (TRC is expecting to get official approval letter next week). Please note that large caseloads of people in informal housing should still be sent through the regular reporting template via the ESSN Task Force, and small cases will be followed up by IPA partner referrals. Updated guidance note will be sent out, to advise on large and small caseloads.
- **Illiterate Beneficiaries:**
 - Main applicant must sign a consent form at the time of card collection.
 - If the main applicant is illiterate, the bank may require a notarized signature.
 - We are conducting a district-level mapping of IPA partners, to complement TRC capacity. IPA partners will assist beneficiaries obtain a certificate from the notary indicating their illiteracy, and incur the cost of around 50-70TRY plus an amount for a translator (including transportation costs). A meeting will be held IPA partners. If other partners have funding to assist ESSN eligibles, please reach out to us through the Task Force. In the meantime, if partners encounter illiterate beneficiaries please call **168** to refer them to TRC.
- **Disability Health Report:** Feedback will be collected through the online service feedback form (an inter-agency tool, working closely with Protection and Health Working Group)

Links to the form:

English: <https://goo.gl/forms/rJdRsznyOhuMKhVw1>

Turkish: <https://goo.gl/forms/xQs3z4nGQMjN90XJ3>

Arabic: <https://goo.gl/forms/OCVsdvnnh81HNNjC2>

- **Stop Gap Assistance:** At the next National Basic Needs Working Group we will discuss further how to harmonize stop gap assistance for those who are eligible to the ESSN but have a delay in accessing it due to barriers meeting the pre-requisites.

4. **Presentation on Market Monitoring Report (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. It is 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.
- Mainly covering 8 regions where 84% of the refugees are located. The selected areas all have a significant population of refugees, and are areas from which data was available. The regional MEB costs are calculated accordingly:
 - 3 larger cities: Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir
 - 4 regions in southeast: Sanliurfa-Diyarbakir, Adana-Mersin, Hatay-Kahramanmaras-Osmaniye, Gaziantep-Adiyaman-Kilis
 - 1 region in west: Bursa-Eskisehir-Bilecik
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures changes in the price level of market basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households. Prices of a sample of representative items (in a basket) are collected periodically to construct the CPI. In March 2017, annual inflation accelerated to a nine year high of 11.29%. Istanbul has the highest MEB, followed by Izmir and Ankara. The lowest MEB is found in the southeast, in Hatay-Kahramanmaras-Osmaniye and Adana-Mersin.
- Food inflation is the main driver in rise of CPI.
- Food and rent is almost the 2/3 of the MEB.
- Steep increase in energy prices, particularly in cooking gas.
- Food prices nationwide over the last quarter are diverging from international prices.
- Average MEB is 1,927 TL for a household of six, or 321 TL per capita.
- Rent explains a significant (~65%) proportion of the difference in the cost of MEB in Istanbul (max MEB during reporting period) and Hatay-Kahramanmaras-Osmaniye (min MEB during reporting period).
- ~5% increase in the cost of MEB over the last quarter, ~10% 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.

5. Update from TRC and UNICEF on Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE)

- The first payment to beneficiaries were made on May 31st. 56 245 children were entitled for payment and 33 019 Kizilaykarts were uploaded. CCTE beneficiaries are from 78 provinces (6 606 from Gaziantep and 1 each from Sinop and Bayburt respectively).
- Majority of the CCTE beneficiaries are primary school students (90 %) followed by the pre-school/kindergarten students (6%) and high school students (4%) respectively. Gender distribution of the beneficiary caseload is almost 50% girls and 50% boys and gender parity in number of beneficiaries is observed (provinces). Majority of the students are from the Grade 1 (19 309). Partners would like to find out the reason behind the low number of kindergarten rate.
- 39 % of CCTE wallets (cardholders)/accounts are also benefiting from ESSN. These numbers might be adjusted/change as there is criteria change.
- Execution of the SMS plan for ineligible beneficiaries has been delayed due to data complications.
- Temporary Education Center (TEC) students have been able to apply for the CCTE program from June onwards and will be able to benefit from CCTE payments either July or September onwards (depending on timing of application and timing of payment calculation processes)_
- Calls received about CCTE by TRC 168 Call Center are mostly information requests, in particular on application process and the location for the card pick up.
- Distribution Monitoring: 20 Bank branches have been visited in 9 provinces.
 - Branches were chosen among the busiest locations.
 - The issues observed across locations: ATM usage, PIN distributions, communications between the bank staff and beneficiaries and handling of the illiterate cases.
 - Question on bank branches regarding the illiterate beneficiaries. Some of the bank branches are accepting the signature stamps.
- Issue regarding the ATM language was raised by the partners. Since it is only available in Arabic, it is difficult to access for non-Arabic speakers. TRC noted that it will be also available in Turkish and other languages in the future, starting first with Turkish language in October.
- Regarding the support for the kindergarten students, provincial level statistics will be provided for the next update. Availability of district level statistics will be explored.
- Question regarding the CCTE programme can also be addressed to 168 call center. 168 is the generic number for the TRC. After 168, please dial 9 for the Arabic speaking assistance.
- . TEC students were not included in the May payment due to technical reasons, but TEC students can also apply for the CCTE programme as of 1 June 2017. For the time being, UNICEF is not certain if it will be possible to include them in July payment. If not July, they will be included for the September payment.
- **It is very important to raise awareness that the CCTE programme is not only supporting children attending public school, but also those who are attending Temporary Education Centers (TECs). Families with children attending TECs should go and apply for the CCTE as soon as possible.**

6. AOB

- Duplication Matrix
 - Organizations needs to fill and share the matrix with TRC on a monthly basis. Please do so by the end of month and TRC will give the feedback within 1 week.
 - Please use the matrix to email the TRC team in either English or Turkish. Additionally please provide a request letter (attached) every time you request information on duplications.
- Please remember to send any issues/challenges observed with as much detail as possible (location, date, etc.) to the ESSN TF.
- Next ESSN TF Istanbul meeting will be held in the beginning of September after Bayram. The venue and date TBD.