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# Soup Kitchen Project Beneficiary Survey Report WFP Turkey Country Office

June 2021

## Writers

Meryem Ay Kesgin (VAM Associate)

Başak Berçin Doğan (Head of VAM and M&E)

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## Acknowledgement

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# Executive Summary

The global Covid-19 pandemic has affected people's lives beyond a health crisis; it led to income loss for many and interrupted food supply chains that resulted in increased food prices and limited foreign trade of food products. As a response to the pandemic, WFP in collaboration with GIZ and IOM provided food, equipment, and staff to the soup kitchen facilities of 8 municipalities across Turkey in order to support their capacity to serve hot meals for the most vulnerable. During the project, a total of 1,620,639 meals were delivered to 11,549 vulnerable individuals between July 2020 to January 2021. Assessments made to measure the scale of the crisis and its impact on affected populations have played just as important a role as the interventions designed to respond to the crisis in a comprehensive and effective way.

This assessment aims to evaluate the well-being of the project beneficiaries with regards to food consumption, dietary diversity, and coping strategy patterns; evaluate WFP's intervention in response to COVID-19 and provide guidance to the programme.

Data collection was conducted in two rounds: the first round (pre-assistance) was completed between July-August 2020 and the second round (post-assistance) was carried out between December 2020 and January 2021.

Progress has been observed in indicators representing food and nutrition security and household coping behaviours among male-headed households while vulnerable female-headed households continued to struggle meeting their food needs. During the implementation period food inflation<sup>1</sup> increased dramatically and resulted in a sharp decrease in project beneficiaries' purchasing power. Pandemic and its devastating consequences on the economy challenged the lives of the beneficiaries. The assistance partially covered the food needs of the vulnerable households and helped them retain pre-crisis level of consumption. Access to food would have been more difficult without the assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Food inflation increased from 12 percent in July 2020 to 21 percent in January 2021.

# Highlights

## Household Profiles

### PROJECT BENEFICIARIES ARE VULNERABLE.

- 68 percent of the households in the endline survey had at least one member with special needs.
- The post-assistance figures show that 38 percent of the households relied on assistance as their primary income source. Female-headed households (45%) were more assistance-dependent.
- At the end line survey, in 56 percent of the households, no family member was working in the last 30 days.
- 43 percent of the households in the second round reported having received assistance (mostly multi-purpose cash and food baskets) from other institutions in addition to the Soup Kitchen meals.

## Food and Nutrition Security

### FOOD CONSUMPTION AND DIETARY DIVERSITY HAVE IMPROVED AMONG THE MALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, BUT THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS CONTINUED TO STRUGGLE MEETING THEIR FOOD NEEDS.

- The level of acceptable food consumption increased by 4 percent following the project, reaching 69 percent, yet, the level of poor food consumption also increased by 4 percent, reaching 22 percent.
- The percentage of children who had more than 4 meals per day increased from 3 percent to 11 percent, however 1 in 4 children still consumed only two meals per day.
- The dietary diversity score of the male-headed households slightly

increased from 5.95 to 6.16, mainly driven by more frequent consumption of meat, dairy, fruit and pulses. However, female-headed households experienced deterioration.

- The ability to cook at home as much as desired diminished primarily due to insufficient disposable income to purchase food items, particularly among the female-headed households.

## Household Coping Mechanisms

### RESORTING TO AT LEAST ONE TYPE OF CONSUMPTION COPING BEHAVIOURS (SUCH AS RELYING ON CHEAPER FOOD PRODUCTS, REDUCING PORTION SIZE ETC.) AND SEVERITY/FREQUENCY OF APPLICATION HAVE REDUCED AMONG THE MALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, WHEREAS FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS INCREASED THE USE OF COPING STRATEGIES TO SECURE THEIR FOOD INTAKE.

- The majority of the households (80%) reported having resorted to some sort of coping strategy to meet their food needs (representing a 5% decrease from the baseline)—a practice observed to be more prevalent among female-headed households (increased from 84% to 88%).
- Most of the beneficiaries relied on cheaper and less preferred food even though its frequency decreased after the assistance (from 4 to 3 days per week), and more than half of them borrowed food or received assistance from friends and relatives, which became more frequent than pre-assistance period (from 1 to 2 days per week).
- The amount of accumulated debt decreased among male-headed households, yet, some households continued to borrow money mainly to buy food (53%).

## Recommendations

- Project partners may consider increasing the portion size of the food delivered to the households to eliminate the negative effect of high food inflation, particularly in the female-headed households.
- It is suggested to revisit the menu and make adjustments for dietary restrictions of vulnerable households such as the elderly with high blood pressure or families with young children.
- Having a uniform targeting approach across municipalities and prioritizing female-headed households would improve the methodological design and enable a more effective response.
- In the absence of a control group, it is impossible to assess how the results achieved compared to those for non-assisted households with similar poverty levels at baseline. Given the assistance occurred during a period of intense economic stress it is possible that control group households would have experienced significant deterioration. In the future, it would be good to see whether a control group can be included. This may be difficult due to ethical concerns.

2. People with special needs includes disabled or chronically ill members, pregnant and lactating women in the household.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

In Turkey, the first case of the global Covid-19 pandemic was confirmed in March 2020, followed by a set of nationwide measurements to prevent the spread of the virus, which included temporary shut-down of businesses. As a result, the economy contracted by almost 10 percent in Q1 2020<sup>3</sup> and the industrial production index decreased by 31 percent<sup>4</sup> which led to loss of income for many. The Turkish Government responded by providing a monthly one-off assistance of 1000 TRY to over 6 million vulnerable Turkish families.<sup>5</sup>

The World Food Programme (WFP), the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) responded to the pandemic by adjusting their activities to provide more support to refugees and vulnerable Turkish nationals. The Soup Kitchen Project was implemented in 7 provinces where the MUV (Kitchen of Hope)<sup>6</sup> project was carried out in collaboration with 2 metropolitan and 6 local municipalities

that have soup kitchen facilities. The project strengthened the existing capacity in the soup kitchens and ensured higher coverage of vulnerable groups by providing equipment and food supplies and covering staff costs. While it aimed to support vulnerable households to secure their food intake and support them during the pandemic, it also created employment for some of the MUV (Kitchen of Hope) Project participants who started to work as chef assistants in the municipality soup kitchens.

The Soup Kitchen project delivered a total of 1,620,639 meals to 11,549 individuals between July 2020 and January 2021. **Table 1** presents the number of beneficiaries supported by each municipality.

**Table 1. Number of Beneficiaries Assisted per Municipality**

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Number of beneficiaries assisted</i>	<i>Number of households assisted</i>
Adana Metropolitan Municipality	1210	233
Ankara Metropolitan Municipality	1000	250
Gaziantep Sahinbey Municipality	2500	468
Izmir Menemen Municipality	1110	261
Kilis Municipality	1200	470
Istanbul Sisli Municipality	850	440
Istanbul Sultangazi Municipality	419	336
Sanliurfa Municipality	3260	925

# Chapter 2: Objectives and Methodology

The impact of the project was assessed by conducting pre- and post-assistance surveys. The survey tool was designed to collect data on household composition, food sources and consumption, as well as coping behaviours to meet household needs.

The surveys were conducted by WFP programme assistants and municipality personnel through phone calls. The representative sample size was determined at 90 percent confidence level with +/-5 confidence interval. In the baseline survey, 444 participant

households were interviewed. However, due to attrition, 307 beneficiary households were reached in the endline survey with the confidence interval level of +/-5.5. In order to balance the differences among the municipalities, each of the 8 municipalities was weighted to equalize their impacts on the outcomes.

3. Turkish Statistical Institute, Quarterly Gross Domestic Product, Quarter III: July-September, 2020.

4. Turkish Statistical Institute, Industrial Production Index, July 2020.

5. <https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/tr-tr/haberler/bakan-selcuk-sosyal-koruma-kalkani-kapsaminda-yaptigimiz-yardimlarin-tutari-45-5-milyar-liraya-yaklasti/>

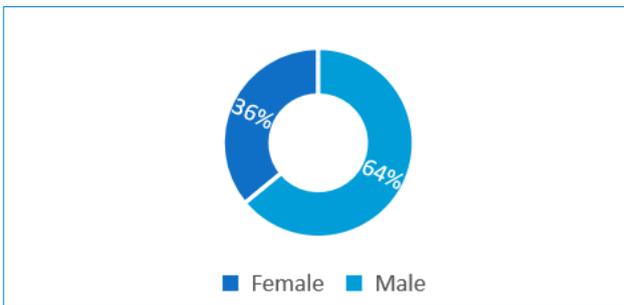
6. MUV (Kitchen of Hope) project is implemented through a partnership between the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR). It aims to train and equip the participants with culinary skills and place them in the hospitality and food-service sectors with the ultimate goal of improving the livelihoods and self-reliance of SuTP and vulnerable host communities.

# Chapter 3: Findings

## 3.1 Head of Households

Each municipality selected the soup kitchen beneficiaries from the application lists, based on their own targeting criteria. Female-headed households and single females make a sizable group with 36 percent of the households being led by female members (Figure 1). The median ages are 52 and 56 for female and male heads of households respectively.

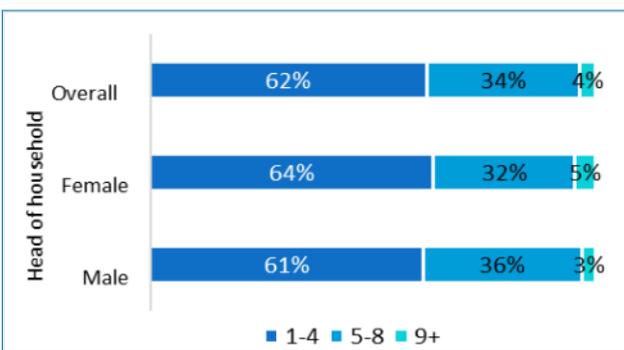
Figure 1. Sex of the Head of the Household



## 3.2. Household Size

Analysis shows that the average household size is 3.9 people. Among the beneficiaries, 3 out of 5 households have 4 or fewer members. Most of these households are composed of elderly people living alone or elderly couples. Larger households with 9 or more members are not prevalent, yet among them, the majority are female-headed (Figure 2).

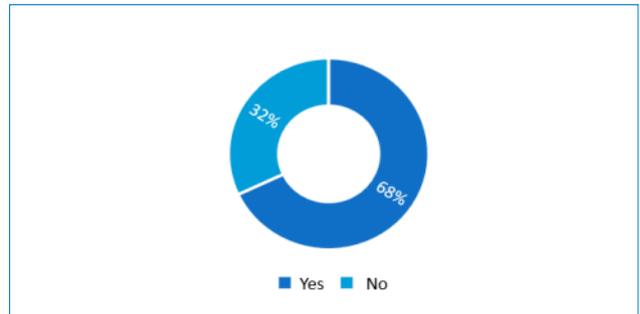
Figure 2: Household Size



## 3.3 Households with special needs

More than half of the households (68%) have at least one member with special needs (Figure 3) such as chronically ill, pregnant, or lactating individuals that require special treatment and/or have specific dietary needs.

Figure 3. Household Members with Special Needs



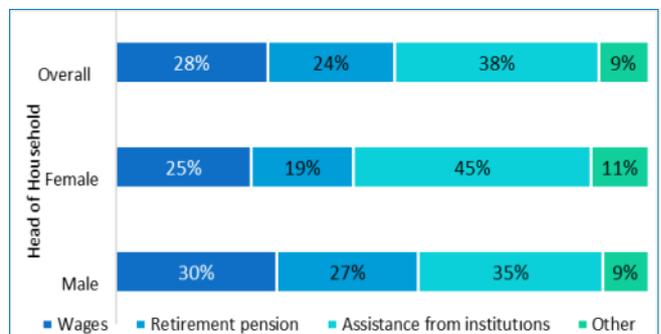
## 3.4 Income Sources of the Households

Among all, only 28 percent of the households reported earned income as their main income source while almost half (47%) stated that they relied on external sources, mainly assistance from institutions. Likewise, 43 percent of the households reported having benefited from other types of assistance in addition to the Soup Kitchen meals, primarily in the form of multi-purpose cash and food baskets.

Gender analysis shows that dependency on assistance is more prevalent among female-headed households. Moreover, male-headed households reported wages and pensions as their main income source more often than female-headed households.

Data reveals that no one worked in the last 30 days prior to the survey in more than half (56%) of the households. It is important to highlight that child labour has been reported by 9 percent of female-headed and 5 percent of male-headed households.

Figure 4: Primary Source of Income of the Households



# Chapter 4: Outcomes

## 4.1 Food Consumption

The percentage of the households with acceptable food consumption increased from 65 percent to 69 percent.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the number of meals consumed in a day has improved for adults and children throughout the project period.

Beneficiaries who had three meals per day increased from 45 percent in the baseline survey to 53 percent in the endline, and children who had more than 4 meals per day increased from 3 percent to 11 percent. In spite of the progress, it is concerning that more than one-fourth of the beneficiary children eat only two meals a day.

On the flipside, the findings also show that the percentage of people with poor food consumption levels increased from 18 percent to 22 percent. While the Soup Kitchen Project was designed as an in-kind assistance activity and aimed to retain pre-crisis food consumption levels by delivering hot meals, it partially covered the food needs as the project delivered only one meal daily in most of the municipalities and the beneficiaries met the rest of their food consumption needs through their own means.

The increase in food prices and loss of income directly affected food consumption of the beneficiaries. Figure 6 shows the upward trend in annual inflation rates with an increase particularly in food inflation rates from 12 percent in July 2020 to 21 percent in January 2021. The increase in poor food consumption among some households might be linked to difficulty in accessing adequate food, as food items become less affordable for vulnerable households. Loss of income is another barrier against accessing adequate food. The beneficiary households with no members working in the 30 days increased from 56 percent to 61 percent in the given period.

Figure 5. Food Consumption Groups

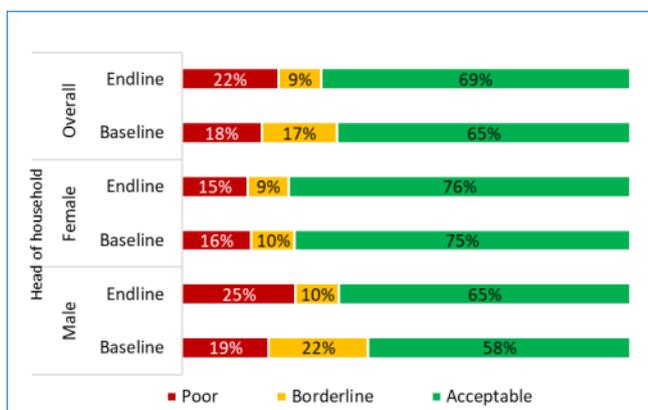
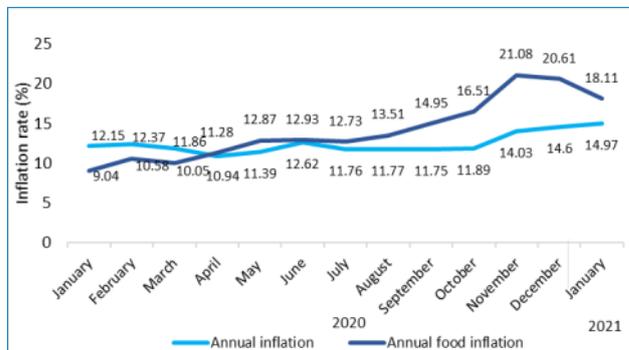


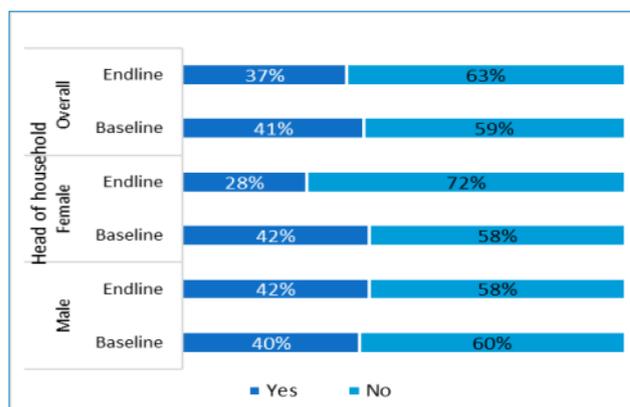
Figure 6. Food Inflation Trends



Prior to the assistance, 41 percent of the households reported that they could cook as often as desired, yet this ratio decreased to 37 percent in the endline survey. The decrease among female-headed households was quite marked (from 42% to 28%).<sup>8</sup> Even though some households received food baskets along with the hot meals from the soup kitchens, the level of satisfaction with cooking at home deteriorated over time most probably due to the drastic increase in food prices.

In 70 percent of both the male and female-headed households, the primary reason for not being able to cook at home as much as hoped for was the lack of money to buy food. Moreover, 27 percent of male-headed households and 16 percent of female-headed households mentioned that the household members were too old or sick to cook.

Figure 7. : Cooking at Home as Desired



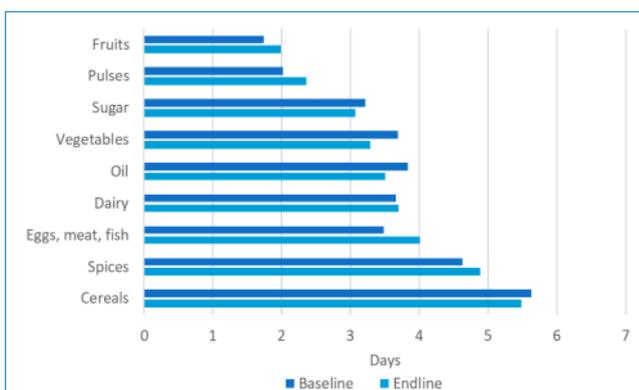
7 The result is statistically significant (p<0.05).

8 The findings are statistically significant (p<0.05) only for female-headed households, for the entire sample and male-headed households they are not.

## 4.2 Dietary Diversity

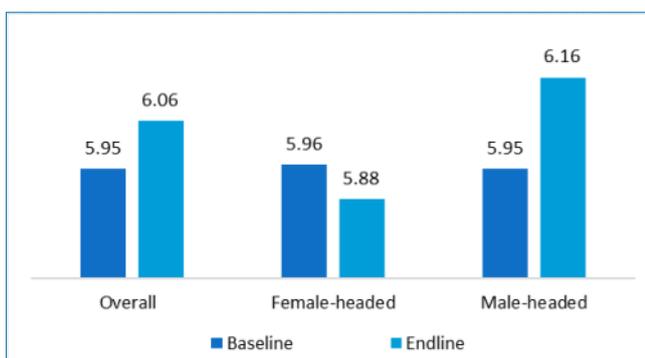
Dietary diversity is another indicator used by WFP as a proxy for food security. The dietary diversity analysis shows that the beneficiaries adequately consumed most of the food groups as shown in **Figure 8** with the exception of fruits and pulses, which were only consumed around 2 days a week. Compared to the baseline, the consumption frequency increased particularly in animal protein (eggs, fish and meat), fruits, pulses, and dairy products, which can be attributed to the diversity of the food delivered by the Soup Kitchen project.

**Figure 8. Dietary Diversity Score**



Overall, the Dietary Diversity Score increased from 5.95 to 6.06 (out of 7.00) in the reporting period.<sup>9</sup> Gender analysis shows that female-headed households could not attain the same level as male-headed households in terms of dietary diversity. Data indicates that the frequency of cereal, vegetable, and dairy consumption decreased among female-headed households. It should be noted that the Soup Kitchen Project delivers the same food to all households. The decrease in dietary diversity of female-headed households is likely due to lack of access to food other than the Soup Kitchen meals.

**Figure 9. Dietary Diversity Score Values at Baseline and Endline**

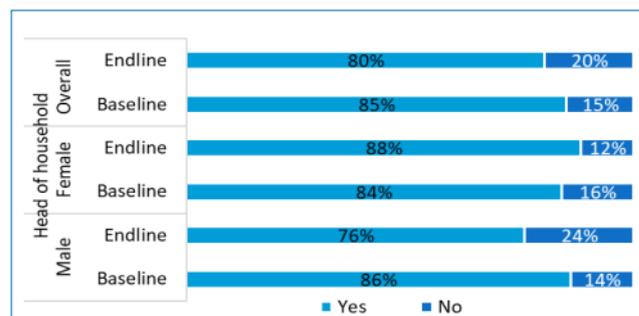


<sup>9</sup> The findings are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).  
<sup>10</sup> The findings are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).  
<sup>11</sup> The findings are statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

## 4.3 Consumption Coping Strategies

Vulnerable households tend to apply coping mechanisms to meet their basic needs when they lack resources. This chapter assesses to what extent beneficiary households have applied coping strategies to meet their food needs. The analysis reveals that the adoption of at least one type of consumption-based coping strategies decreased by 5 percent compared to the baseline.<sup>10</sup> Yet, an overwhelming majority of the households (80%) still reported having resorted to at least one sort of coping strategy to meet their food needs at the endline. Also, an increase (from 84% to 88%) in resorting to coping behaviours among female-headed households was measured between the two rounds, yet, the difference was not found statistically significant (Figure 10). The most commonly used coping strategy was reliance on cheaper and less preferred food (68%), and it was applied more by female-headed households (77%). The reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) measures the weekly frequency and severity of five consumption coping strategies due to

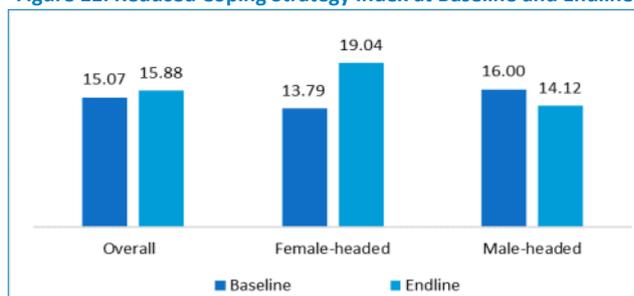
**Figure 10. Resorting to Reduced Coping Strategies**



not having enough food. These strategies include reliance on cheaper or less preferred food, borrowing food, reducing the number of meals, reducing the portion size of meals, or reducing food for adults to allow small children to eat more. A lower rCSI score indicates a household that can meet food needs without changing patterns in daily food consumption.

Figure 11 presents the rCSI scores by gender and shows that the score slightly decreased among male-headed households while increasing among female-headed households. In line with the findings above, severity and frequency of consumption-based coping behaviours increased<sup>11</sup> among female-headed households between baseline and endline surveys.

**Figure 11. Reduced Coping Strategy Index at Baseline and Endline**



## 4.4 Debt

The amount of accumulated debt has decreased<sup>12</sup> among male-headed households (Figure 12), which demonstrates that households have partially paid off their debt over the course of the project. However, the findings show that around 40 percent of the households reported having borrowed money in the last three months prior to the survey and this percentage was stable during the project implementation period. Covering food needs was the primary reason for borrowing money for more than half (53%) of the households. Also, it is notable that the households (both male and female-headed) who took on debt to pay bills represented the highest percentage increase among all categories (Figure 13).

Figure 12. Median debt (TRY)

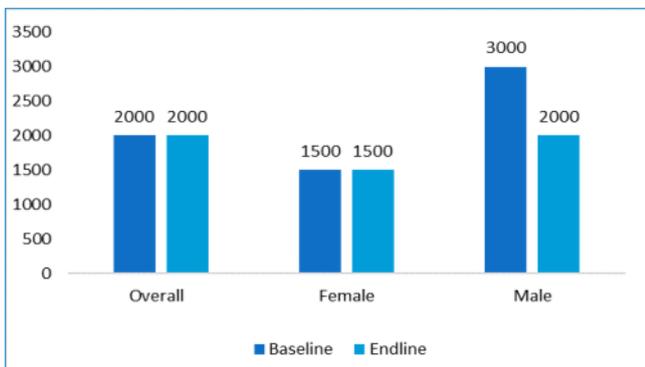
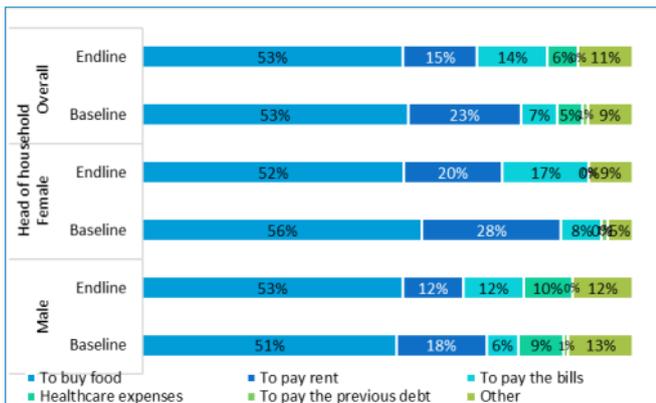


Figure 13: Reasons to borrow money



enhancing existing municipality capacities to provide beneficiaries with in-kind food assistance. The project aimed to prevent vulnerable people from the devastating consequences of the pandemic and helped them retain pre-crisis levels in terms of access to food.

It is worth mentioning that the Covid-19 was accompanied by a dramatic increase in food prices during this period. In line with global trends, food inflation in Turkey has risen from 12 percent to 21 percent over the project implementation (July 2020-January 2021). Furthermore, households with no working members increased from 56 percent to 61 percent in the given period. Combined with income loss due to lockdowns, vulnerable groups have been further pulled into poverty and suffered from reduced purchasing power.

This assessment provides insights into how the project influenced the food consumption and coping behaviours of the beneficiaries. Findings show that the food consumption and dietary diversity of the beneficiaries have slightly improved during the project period, going beyond stabilization. Particularly, the consumption frequency of animal-sourced products such as meat, eggs, and dairy has increased over time. However, the gender breakdown reveals that there is a significant difference between the male-headed and the female-headed households. While the indicators show progress among the male-headed households such as improvement in dietary diversity, decrease in resorting to coping strategies, and amount of accumulated debt, female-headed households indicated deterioration in almost all indicators during the project period.

It is important to highlight that the project was only ever intended to partially cover the food needs of the households, who still had to purchase about two-thirds of their caloric needs from their own income, which might explain the positive but limited impact on the food intake and consumption-based coping behaviours of the project beneficiaries. Also, in the absence of a control group, we can only assume that non-assisted households fared worse during the same period. Therefore, the beneficiary households could have been more heavily hit by the pandemic without the assistance provided through the Soup Kitchen Project.

In the given conditions, the project could improve its impact by increasing the portion size of the food delivered to the households as it would contribute to necessary calorie intake and decrease the burden on the household budget, particularly among female-headed households. Additionally, the food menu might be adjusted for the target population; elderly households reported that they could not consume some of the delivered food due to their health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetics, or other geriatric conditions. Households with younger children also stated that the food was too spicy for their taste. Providing a diet corresponding to the beneficiary household needs would lead to better project achievements. Lastly, it is recommended to apply a standardized targeting approach to avoid discrepancies and to prioritize female-headed households to better assist them during the pandemic.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

After the first confirmed case of the Covid-19 outbreak in Turkey in March 2020, the preventive measures against the spread of the virus included the closure of many businesses across all industries that left many households without income and in vulnerable conditions. Along with the Government's efforts, the humanitarian sector has adjusted its programmes to the Covid-19 response. In this regard, WFP's collaboration with GIZ, IOM, and 8 municipalities with soup kitchen facilities reached out to additional vulnerable households by

<sup>12</sup> The findings are statistically significant (p<0.05)

# APPENDIX: Refugee Beneficiaries

The Soup Kitchen project targeted both the refugee and local vulnerable households. In the Southeastern provinces that are bordering Syria, the refugee population was denser and therefore a sizeable number of refugees took part in the survey. However, in the provinces with a lower population of refugees,

quite a smaller number of refugee participants were interviewed. In the endline survey, only 20 percent of the participants were refugees. Below are the survey findings for refugees and the host community members.

Figure 14: Head of Household

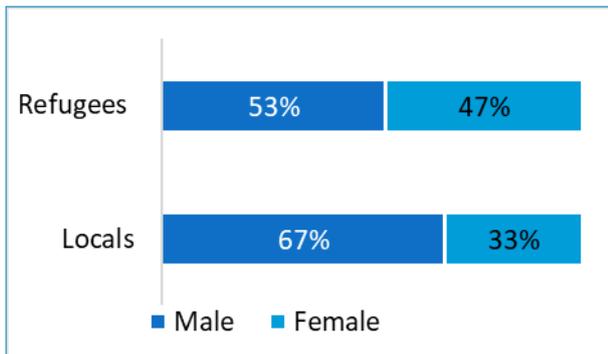


Figure 17: Primary source of income of the Household

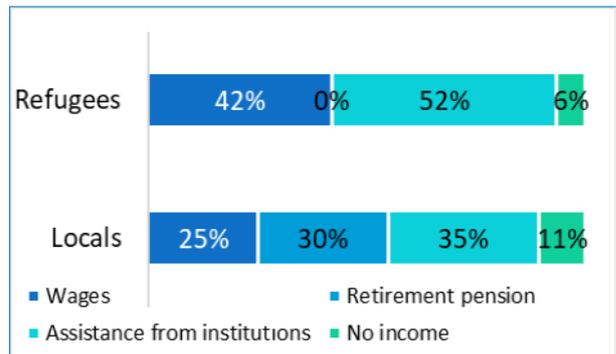


Figure 15: Household Size

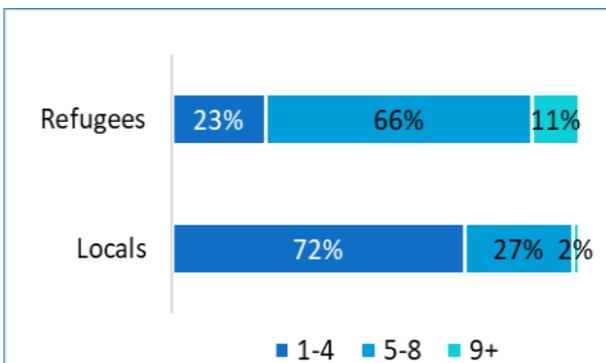


Figure 18: Working HH members in the last 30 days

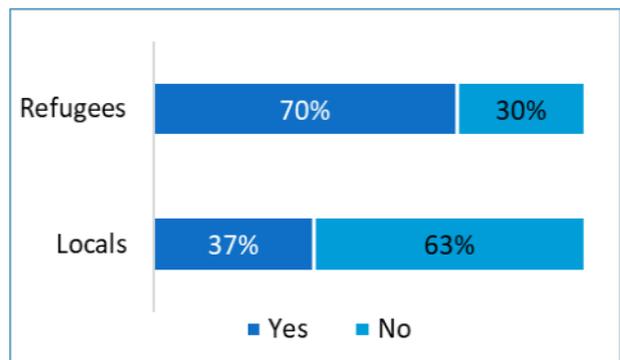


Figure 16: Household Members with Special Needs

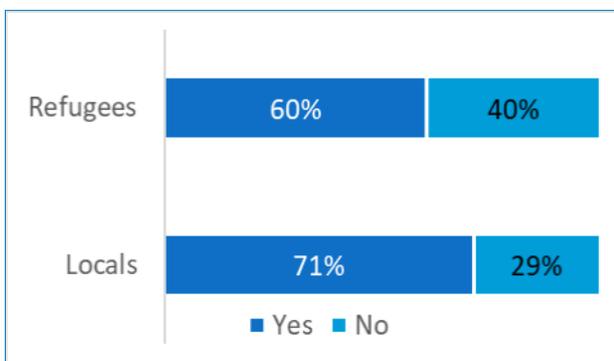


Figure 19: Received assistance in the last 30 days

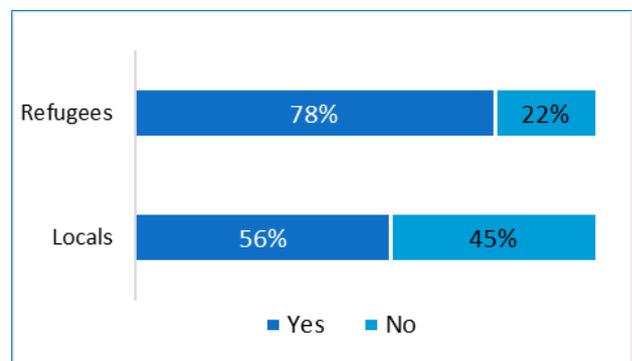


Figure 20: Food Consumption Score

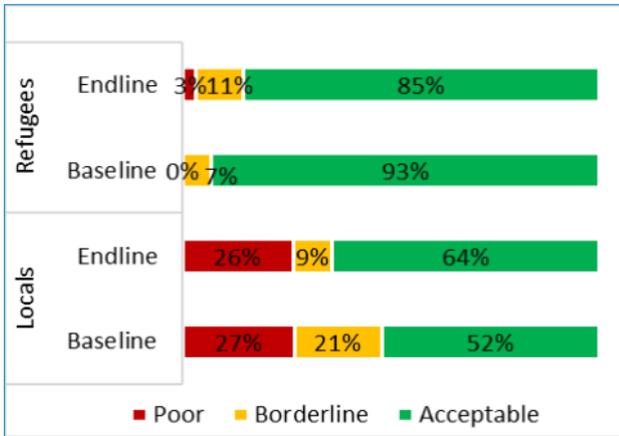


Figure 23: Borrowed money in the last 3 months

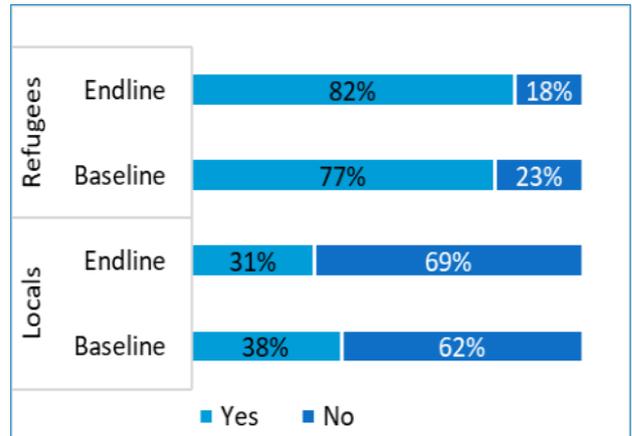


Figure 21: Cooking food as much as desired

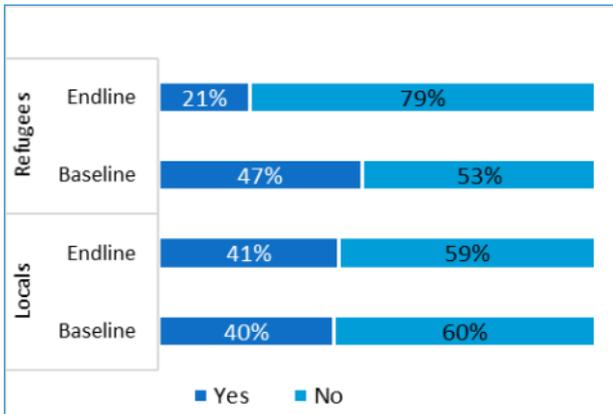


Figure 24: Medium debt of the households

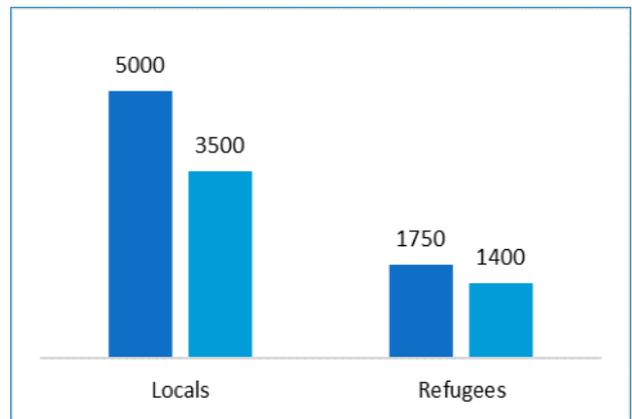
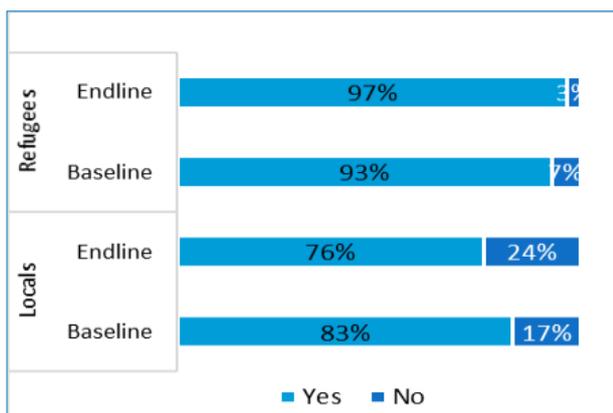


Figure 22: Use of Reduced Coping Strategies by refugees





**World Food Programme**

Turkey Country Office

Rafet Canitez Caddesi No: 107

Oran Şehri, 06450 Çankaya, Ankara, Turkey

co.tur.m&e@wfp.org

[wfp.org](http://wfp.org)