

Monitoring results from WFP Regional Emergency Operation 200433 "Food assistance to vulnerable Syrian populations in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt affected by conflict in Syria"



Photo: WFP/Joelle Eid

### Highlights

- ❖ As of September 2014, WFP's monthly caseload reached over **1.85 million Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and Turkey**.
- ❖ WFP food assistance is contributing to the **improvement and stabilization of food consumption** of assisted Syrian refugees. In line with previous quarters, **87 percent of WFP assisted households reported an acceptable level of food consumption** across the region.
- ❖ **Higher dietary diversity among voucher assisted refugees** is observed in Iraq.
- ❖ Despite the stabilization of food consumption levels, the **adoption of food consumption-based and asset depletion coping strategies are still frequent** among WFP assisted refugees.
- ❖ **In-focus** section on monitoring results from **Syria Emergency Operation**

## Introduction: overview of WFP activities

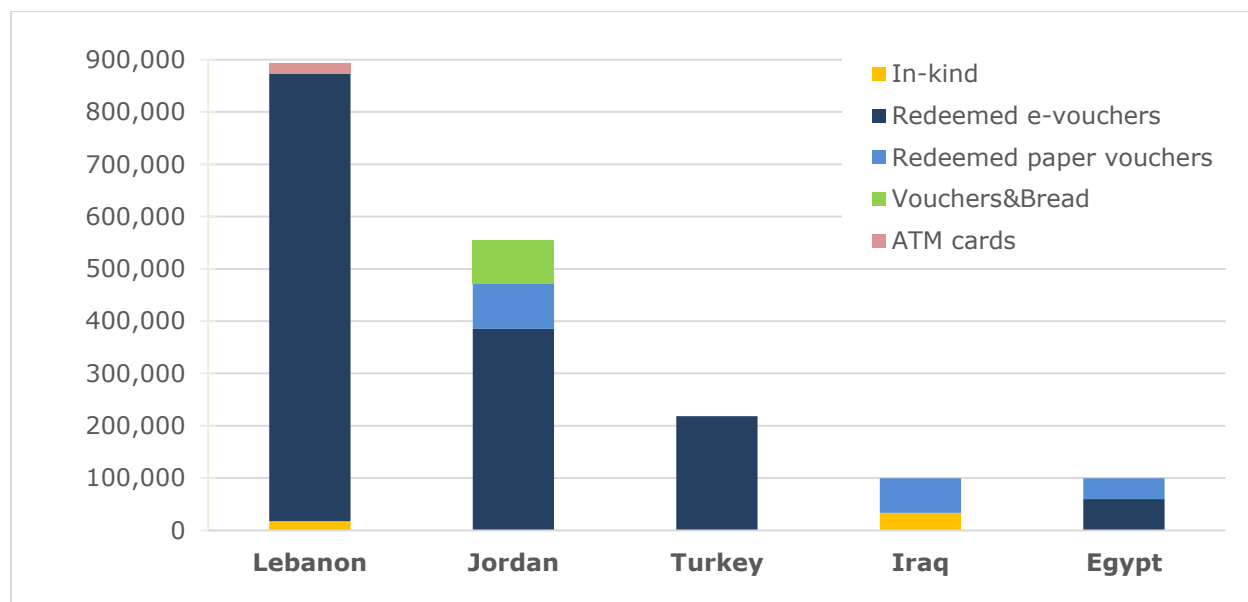
As of **September 2014**, WFP provided monthly food assistance to approximately **1,867,000 Syrian refugees**<sup>1</sup> hosted in neighboring countries (Figure 1).

Assistance to Syrian refugees is provided mainly in the form of monthly distributions of **food vouchers**. In-kind assistance is also provided to Syrian refugees hosted in Iraqi camps (except Domiz camp, where vouchers are distributed), as well as to Syrian refugees hosted in Za'atari camp in Jordan (where they also receive additional in-kind bread).<sup>2</sup>

During the third quarter of 2014, WFP injected approximately **US\$ 150 million** into the regional economy through its voucher programmes; as of September 2014, approximately 85 percent of the voucher beneficiaries were receiving WFP food assistance through **electronic vouchers (e-cards)**.

The **transition from paper vouchers to e-cards** is still ongoing in Jordan and is planned to be concluded by end of 2014. Here, in-kind daily distributions of bread in refugee camps complement the food vouchers assistance. In-kind food assistance is also provided to new arrivals in Lebanon (one-off), and to approximately 34 percent of WFP-assisted Syrian refugees in Iraq (monthly). In Lebanon, WFP food assistance through ATM cards to approximately 21,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria started in August 2014, in collaboration with UNRWA.

**Figure 1 - Monthly beneficiaries of WFP Regional Emergency Operation (September 2014)**



Source: Monthly distribution reports

<sup>1</sup> Caseload also includes ~ 21,000 and ~ 3,500 Palestinian refugees from Syria assisted in Lebanon and Egypt respectively.

<sup>2</sup> To avoid beneficiary double counting, the graph does not include recipients of School Feeding and welcome meals in Jordan (caseload of ~ 19,000 and ~ 16,000 respectively).

## Food security outcome results

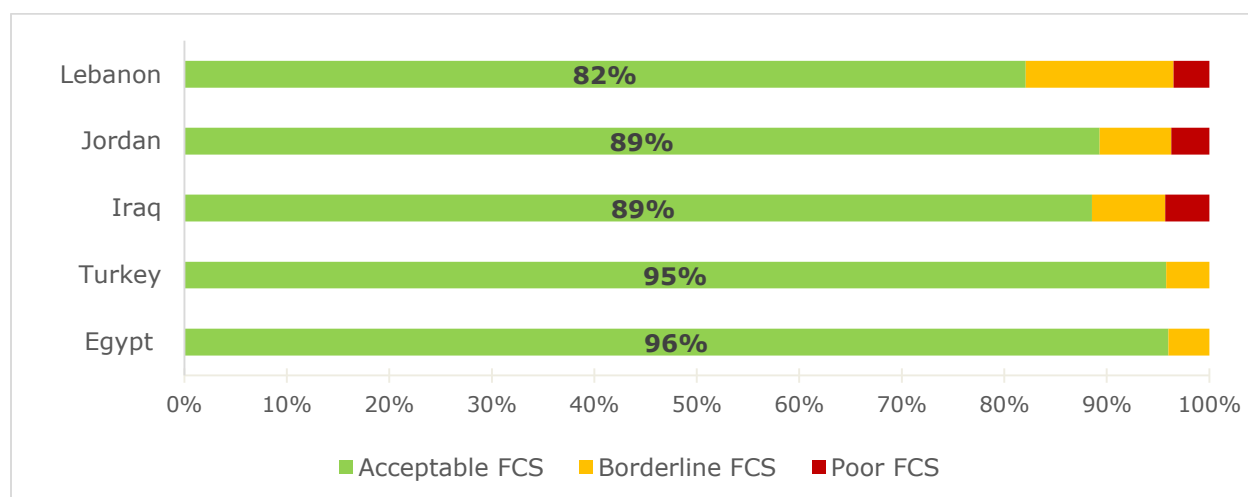
### Continued stabilization of household food consumption

During the third quarter of 2014, the WFP **post-distribution monitoring (PDM)** exercise revealed that the proportion of assisted Syrian households with an acceptable Food Consumption Score<sup>3</sup> (FCS) remained relatively stable in each of the five countries hosting refugees. The results presented are in line with the operation main objective to **improve/stabilize the food consumption of the assisted population**.

In line with results from previous quarters, very high proportion (approximately 95 percent) of assisted Syrian refugees with acceptable FCS were observed in Egypt and Turkey. In Lebanon, the lowest levels of acceptable food consumption was observed in North Lebanon (78 percent), although the result shows a slight improvement from previous quarter (75 percent). Furthermore, lower shares of acceptable FCS are observed among Syrian refugees in Lebanon residing in transit centers or informal settlements (76 percent, as opposed to 88 percent acceptable FCS among households in apartments or houses).

Overall, aggregated results over the reporting period showed that only 3 percent of WFP assisted refugee households across the region have a poor FCS. During this quarter, the PDM exercise covered a random sample of 2,284 beneficiary households across the region.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 2 - Food consumption levels among assisted Syrian refugees**



Source: WFP PDM – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014

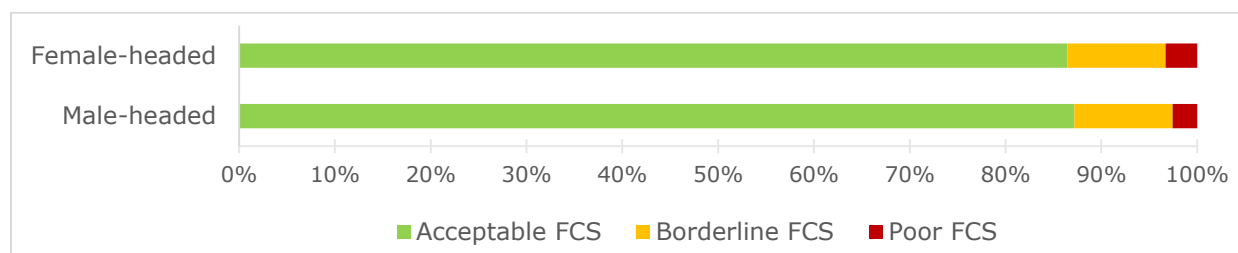
<sup>3</sup> The Household Food Consumption Score is a WFP corporate food security outcome indicator. The score is a proxy of household's current access to food and is based on dietary diversity, consumption frequency of food groups, and their relative nutritional importance. It is based on a recall period of seven days.

<sup>4</sup> Country-level food consumption results are statistically reliable at a >90 percent confidence level with a precision level of  $\pm 5$  percent (assuming an estimation of 85 percent households with acceptable FCS).

## Gender analysis of household food consumption

In line with previous quarter results, **no significant difference** was observed between female-headed and male-headed households in terms of food consumption levels. Results were obtained by aggregating PDM results across the five countries.

**Figure 3 - Food consumption by sex of head of households**

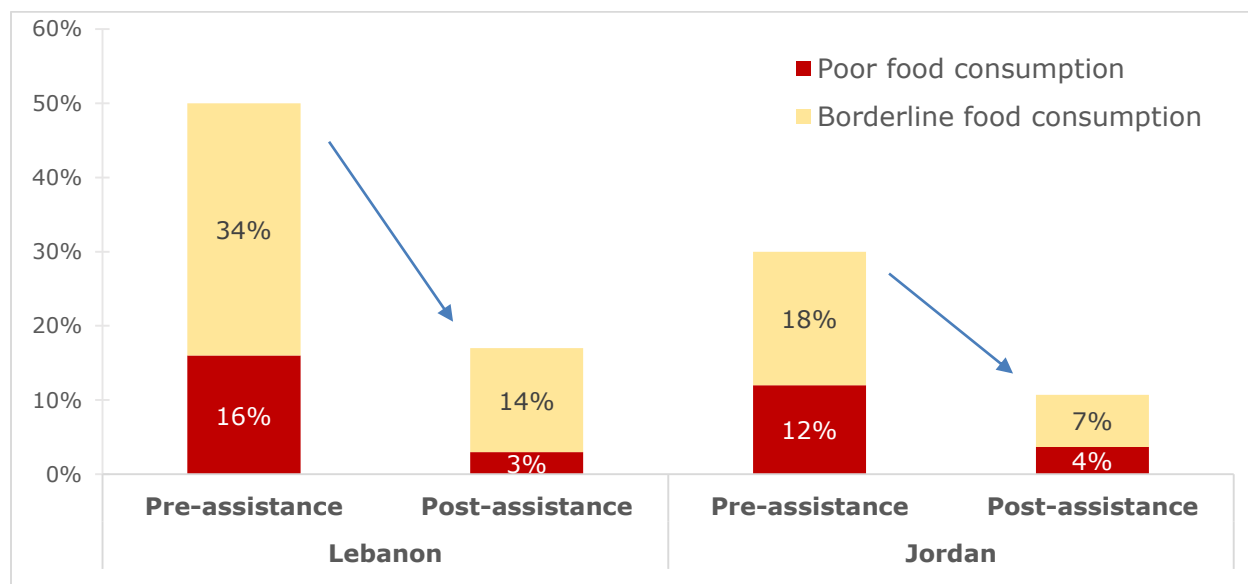


Source: WFP PDM (all five countries aggregated) – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014

## Effectiveness of food assistance in Jordan and Lebanon

**In Jordan and Lebanon, Pre-assistance baseline (PAB)** monitoring exercise on newly arrived refugees<sup>5</sup> has been conducted in parallel with ongoing PDM over the reporting period. Comparative analysis between PAB and PDM results showed that WFP assistance significantly contributes to the **improvement in food consumption levels**. Figure 4 shows these results for the third quarter of 2014.

**Figure 4 - Food consumption of Syrian refugees, pre/post-assistance**



Source: WFP PAB and PDM (Lebanon and Jordan) – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014

<sup>5</sup> In Lebanon, the PAB sample frame also includes non-newly arrived Syrian refugees that are due to receive WFP assistance. The exercise has been regularly conducted since January 2014.

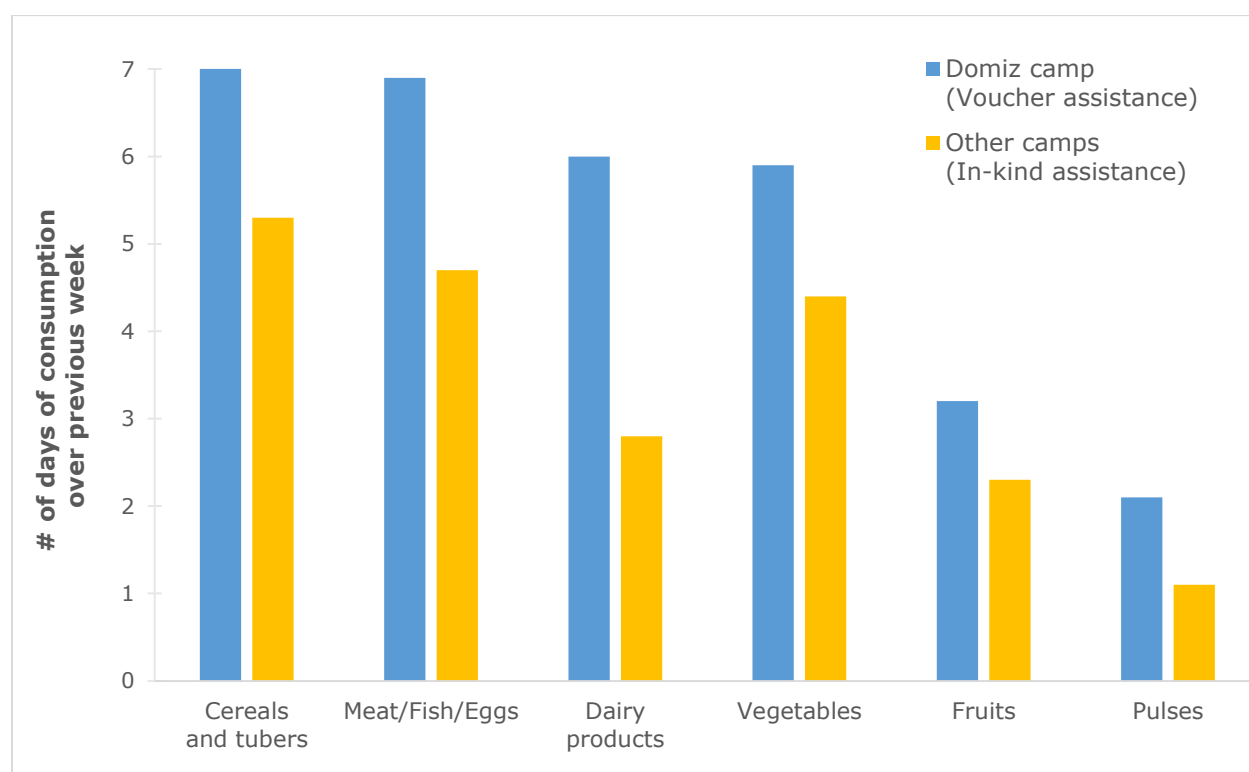
## Iraq: higher dietary diversity among voucher-assisted beneficiaries

Comparative analysis between quarterly outcome results of different transfer modalities has been applied to Iraq, where Syrian refugees are assisted through either food vouchers (~ 66,000 people in Domiz camp as of September 2014) or food parcels (~ 34,000 people in other camps). As has been reported in previous quarter, significant differences between the two groups in terms food consumption patterns and diversity of diet are observed.

In particular, households receiving voucher assistance in Domiz camp reported a higher frequency of consumption for all main food groups, especially for dairy products and animal protein-rich food (meat, fish, and eggs). Based on these findings, it can be assumed that **voucher assistance contributed to greater dietary diversity** and higher consumption of fresh products.

In line with previous quarter findings, it has also been observed that **exchange of part of the in-kind** assistance received by WFP is relatively frequent (approximately 1 out of 2 households), whereas there is no evidence of monetization of vouchers from Iraq PDM. As reported by interviewed beneficiaries, main reasons for exchanging in-kind assistance included need for better/more food, medicines/health, cooking fuel/energy.

**Figure 5 – Dietary diversity of assisted Syrian refugees in Iraq, by transfer modality**



Source: WFP PDM Iraq – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014

## Adoption of coping mechanisms among Syrian refugees remains frequent

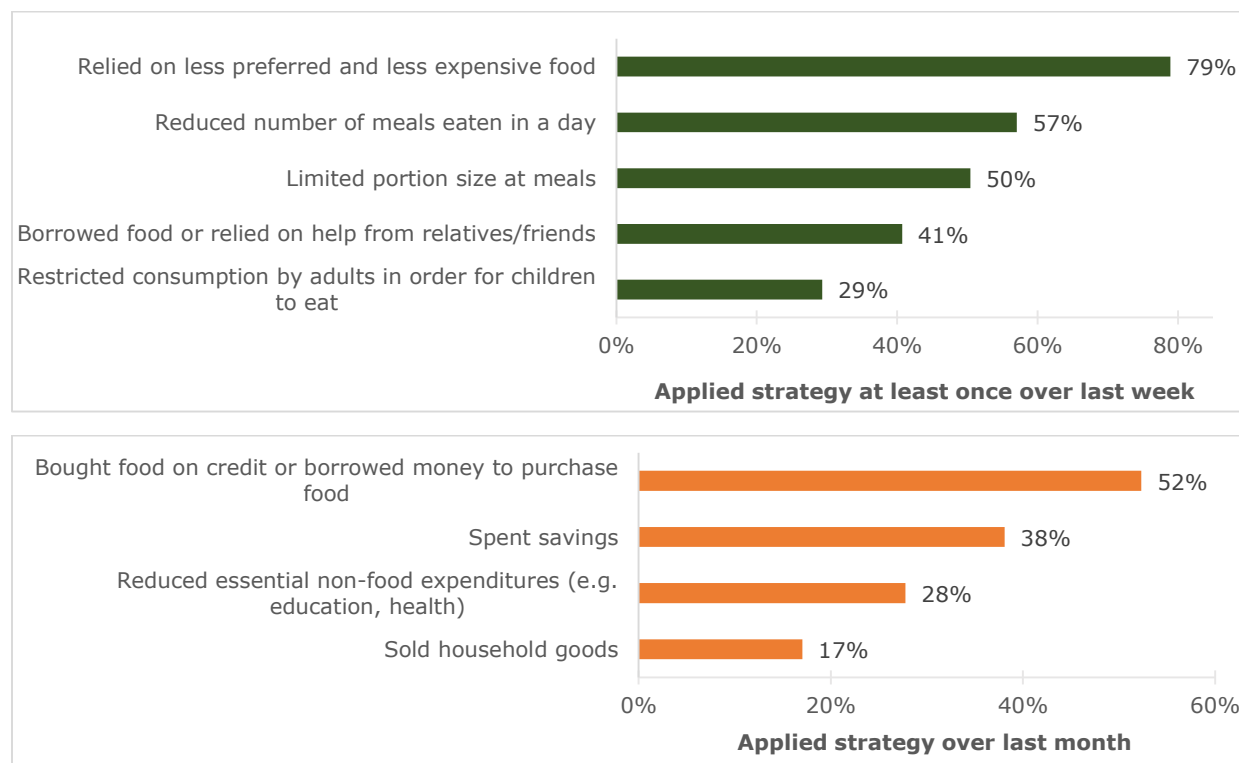
Despite WFP food assistance continues contributing to good results in terms of household food consumption, the adoption of coping mechanisms among assisted Syrian refugee remains an issue of concern. The PDM exercise collects information about adoption of both food-consumption based and asset depletion coping strategies.

Aggregated results from the five countries confirmed that the main food-based coping strategy being adopted by Syrian refugees is to **rely on less preferred or less expensive food** (~ 80 percent). Approximately 1 out of 2 households reported reducing number of meals per day or meal size at least once over previous week. Country-level results are in line with previous quarters, with no significant change in trends.

Frequency of asset-depletion coping mechanisms also remains high among across the region. Approximately 50 percent of refugee households reported **taking on debt** to purchase food, whereas almost 2 out of 5 households reported **spending their savings** during the previous 30 days.

It is likely that without WFP food assistance, frequency of such coping mechanisms would be even higher, jeopardizing household food security in the short and longer term.

**Figure 6 - Adoption of coping strategies (all countries)**



Source: WFP PDM (all five countries aggregated) – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014

## In focus: Syria

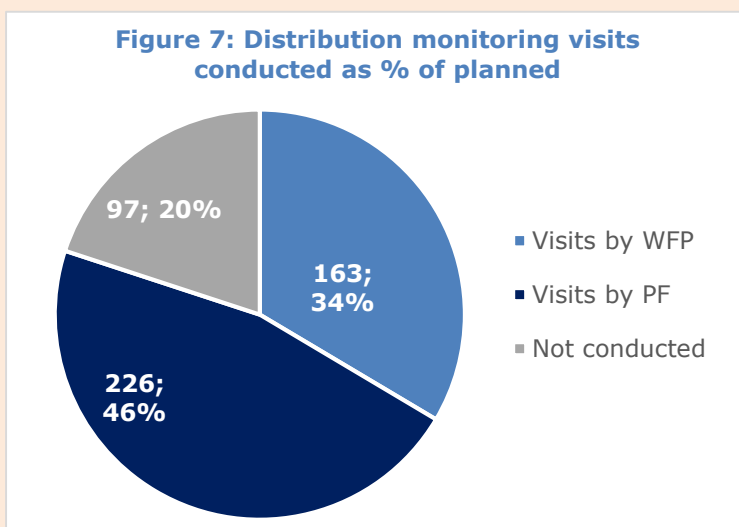
### Overview

Between July and September 2014, WFP provided emergency food assistance to **over 4.13 million people** (97 percent of planned beneficiaries in August) at peak through the distribution of a total of 2.05 million food rations as part of the General Food Distribution (GFD) programme in Syria.

Deteriorating security conditions and shifting lines of active conflict often restrict access to targeted locations, leaving WFP with no option but to re-prioritize assistance that could not be delivered to intended destinations to other areas, not originally planned, where high humanitarian needs are reported. In September, despite the worsening security situation particularly in the northern and north-eastern provinces, WFP reached almost 95 percent of planned beneficiaries. Throughout the reporting period, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, where WFP is targeting close to 600,000 people on a monthly basis, remained inaccessible due to heightened insecurity.

### Coverage of distribution monitoring

Over the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2014, WFP planned to conduct distribution monitoring visits in 488 food distribution points (FDPs) country wide. Out of planned FDPs, WFP managed to cover 389 (80 percent), which represented an improvement when compared to the distribution monitoring coverage during 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter (329 FDPs). To expand monitoring coverage to the unreachable or not easily accessible locations, WFP collaborated with project facilitators (PFs) in parallel with internal food monitors.



Source: field visit reports – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014

### Results from GFD household-level monitoring

WFP Syria collects household-level monitoring information from the implementation areas through internal field monitors, with the aim of understanding the food security situation of GFD beneficiaries. Due to access restrictions and volatile security situation, the information is only collected during distributions and proper sampling methodology cannot regularly be implemented when collecting such information.



Despite of the serious challenges, WFP manages to gather enough monitoring data to yield quarterly food security results for the entire operation.

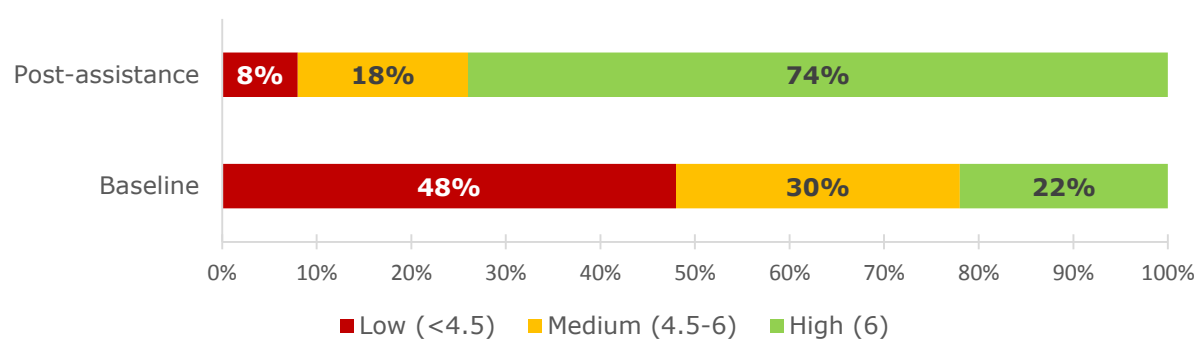
Monitoring data confirms a partial **stabilization of food consumption levels** of assisted households compared to previous quarter, with relatively high levels of poor (18 percent) and borderline (52 percent) FCS. Yet, it should be taken into account that results might be negatively biased by the PDM access constraints. This is because having to gather information on food consumption during distributions (i.e. 30 days or more following the previous monthly distribution) might not help capturing entirely the positive contribution of WFP assistance. In terms of dietary diversity, the analysis reveals that beneficiaries have high level of consumptions of bread (consumed 6.5 days over previous week on average), oil (5.7), and sugar (5.3), whereas fruits, dairy products and animal protein-rich food are consumed on average less than twice per week.

### Evidence of improved dietary patterns of pregnant and lactating women receiving food vouchers

In July 2014, WFP launched a **fresh food voucher programme** in Homs and Lattakia governorates to complement the general food basket and to improve the dietary diversity of internally-displaced **pregnant and lactating women (PLW)**. The vouchers enable women to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy produce, and meat at participating retailers. As of September 2014, the caseload reached approximately 2,000 beneficiaries.

Comparing baseline and post-distribution monitoring results, significant **positive effects on participating beneficiaries' dietary diversity scores**<sup>6</sup> were observed, indicating that WFP voucher assistance is contributing to improvements in dietary patterns of assisted pregnant and lactating women.

**Figure 8: Individual dietary diversity score of assisted PLW**



Source: PLW assistance baseline study (July 2014) and PDM (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014)

<sup>6</sup> The dietary diversity score shown in Figure 8 refers to the number of food groups consumed by PLW over previous seven days.



## More on WFP monitoring activities

In addition to outcome monitoring, WFP continued to conduct monitoring activities at project implementation level through various on-going exercises, namely on-site monitoring (in shops and at distribution points) and beneficiary contact monitoring. The main aim of these process monitoring activities is to inform programme decision makers at country office level to take ad-hoc rapid corrective actions as necessary, in an efficient and timely manner. Main aspects monitored included: specific shop constraints, distribution and redeeming processes, protection issues, preferences, and satisfaction. Furthermore, **price monitoring** exercises are regularly conducted in contracted and non-contracted shops.

In **Lebanon**, the prices of staples and essential foods remained stable throughout the third quarter of 2014. Over the same period, significant changes were observed in the prices of eggs, lemon, lettuce, and cabbage, due to seasonality and low rains throughout the year. Prices in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and South Lebanon remained higher than in the other regions of the country, due to generally higher prices in urban areas.

In **Turkey**, the inclusion of out-of camp shops into the program has proved to be successful with continuous price decrease observed in Nizip 1&2, Akçakale, and Harran. The analysis revealed that shops contracted in urban settings offer a higher range of quality products and prices, whereas those located in camps have a more limited brand diversity. Furthermore, price of rice, bulgur, and sugar were observed to be slightly lower in control shops when compared to contracted shops: differences might be explained by the fact that control shops usually sell in bulk.

In **Jordan**, between August and September, there has been an overall decrease in the food prices at supermarkets in Za'atari camp, especially in terms of rice and pulses (>15 percent decrease). This could be a result of the cancellation of some Community-based Organizations (CBOs) in September which has led to the rise in demand at the two supermarkets and thus a greater volume could be procured for cheaper. During the same period, a slight increase in food prices was observed in partner shops in communities (+5 percent in rice and bulgur).

## Story: Syrian refugees in Lebanon survive on WFP food assistance

*When 60-year-old Hafiza first arrived to Lebanon two years ago fleeing the daily shelling in Eastern Ghouta on the outskirts of Damascus, she refused to depend on assistance. But, like tens of thousands of Syrian refugees across the regions, her saving ran out after only a few months and she registered for WFP's e-card assistance.*

"I wasn't used to receiving assistance and couldn't accept the idea; my pride stood in the way," Hafiza says of her refusal to register for WFP food assistance. "But shortly after I arrived in Lebanon my savings ran out and I had to get my family registered for food assistance."

In Lebanon, Hafiza lives in a rented house with her husband, three daughters and their grandchildren. Humidity invades the walls of the house. The smell of sewage is unmistakable and in winter the cold penetrates their bones.

All that remains of Hafiza's life in Ghouta is a memory of her house. She recalls that shelling had intensified the day she and her family were forced out of the area. When the shelling stopped a few days later, she came back to find the house in ruins. She gathered what remained of her furniture and stored it in a warehouse. Soon after, she learnt through relatives that those items, the only belongings she had left, were stolen. Yet Hafiza is grateful that she has a roof over her head and can feed her big family.

With nearly 1.2 million Syrian refugees now living in Lebanon, a growing number of them now reside in tents, garages, and unfinished buildings, but a majority, sixty percent, live in urban areas renting apartments that they can barely afford.

"We have food on the table every day. And thank God none of us goes hungry," says Hafiza. She is among over 850,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon who receive WFP monthly food assistance in the form of electronic cards worth US\$30 for each family member (figures as of September 2014). Syrians living in Lebanon can use these e-cards to buy the food of their choice, including fresh produce, at local shops.

Hafiza's family depends entirely on WFP assistance to get their food needs. "As soon as our cards are loaded at the start of the month, I immediately go to the shop and get the food we need," she says displaying the food items she recently purchased and that mainly consisted of vegetables, beans, rice, sugar and oil.

Despite losing her house, for Hafiza Syria is still home. "Lebanon is a beautiful country but my dream is to go back home and have all my children gathered around me. I want nothing more of this life but to see Damascus again."



Photo: WFP/Sandy Maroun

*Lana, five-year-old Syrian refugee girl, living in Chhim town in Mount Lebanon area. Lana's family uses WFP e-cards to buy food from local stores.*

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