



FOOD SECURITY SECTOR WORKING GROUP CONTINGENCY PLANNING EXERCISE, JUNE 2015

CONTEXT → 2015 FUNDING SHORTFALLS

In 2015, limited funding forced food assistance activities in Lebanon to be scaled down twice whilst the needs remain the same or are worsening according to preliminary VASyR results.

In January, WFP reduced the e-card voucher value from US\$27 to US\$19. In July, sustained massive regional funding constraints have again compelled WFP to reduce the e-card voucher to 50% of the original value, namely to US\$13.5. The funding level for August is also at 50% with the outlook from September onwards, even bleaker.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING EXERCISE – JUNE 2015 → 50% SHORTFALL FOR JULY AND AUGUST

Based on the estimated beneficiary figures for July,¹ and considering the original US\$27 dollars per month per person needed to cover minimum food requirements, there is a **shortfall of approximately US\$10.6 million for food assistance in July.**

WFP and the food security sector working group (FSS WG), working in close partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), are engaged in contingency planning efforts² to assess gaps and to identify possible availability of stocks, which may serve as complementary to the planned food assistance.

Food Security Sector - Summary of Shortfall in July, 2015*			
Beneficiary Group	Total Number of Targeted Beneficiaries	Monthly Requirement (USD27 pp/m)	Food Assistance Short-fall (50%)
U2	86,783	\$ 2,343,141	\$ 1,171,571
Children 3-5	67,866	\$ 1,832,382	\$ 916,191
Children 5-18	306,219	\$ 8,267,913	\$ 4,133,957
Adult Women 18-60	186,071	\$ 5,023,917	\$ 2,511,959
Adult men 18-60	115,801	\$ 3,126,627	\$ 1,563,314
Elders >60	22,116	\$ 597,132	\$ 298,566
TOTAL	784,856	\$ 21,191,112	\$ 10,595,556

- A total of 21,054 disabled beneficiaries are included within the above beneficiary groups.

* The July beneficiary figures are based on the June cycle and are estimates.

However, the contingency planning exercise has shown that there are **few alternative sources of food assistance available.** To date only UNICEF³, Lebanese Red Cross (1,000 complementary household food parcels) and IOCC (1,000 household food parcels for specific groups) have indicated available stocks to mitigate the shortfall and to top assistance for severely vulnerable households. Whereas Ramadan food assistance provided by a range of organisations may cover some gaps, it is clear that several gaps will remain and will remain after Ramadan.⁴

CONTINGENCY PLANNING EXERCISE → NEXT STEPS

At a contingency planning task force on 19 June, the following was agreed:

- **Targeting Top Up Assistance:** Based on the targeting exercise, household visits and available data, WFP will assist in identifying those that are most vulnerable that should be considered for top up in food assistance. WFP will continue working with sub-offices to identify severely vulnerable households according to food assistance eligibility criteria or severely vulnerable to food insecurity within the group of beneficiary households that have not already been assessed through visits.

¹ These figures are estimates only based on available information on June caseload figures and used to indicate rough estimate of projected shortfall in June. Please note that safety net cases is excluded from this table.

² As per the Standard Operating Procedures developed in early 2015 by the Contingency Plan Sub-Technical Working Group - see http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=122&Id=48

³ UNICEF contributions are mainly for nutrition interventions (malnutrition or acute malnutrition cases) rather than to top up regular food assistance.

⁴ WFP is working with MoSA to coordinate ongoing Ramadan assistance to avoid duplications.

- **Local NGOs / Sub-Regional Level:** MoSA and FSS WG will work together to engage local level NGOs and to reach out through sub-regional Inter Agency meetings, etc.⁵
- **Summary Paper:** FSS WG and MoSA will prepare a document highlighting the key gaps and the impacts of the reduction of food assistance.
- **Private Sector:** The food security sector will work with its members and MoSA to look into working with the private sector. One proposed option is to invite private companies to attend FSS WG meetings to seek possibilities of cooperation.

WFP and the FSS WG will continue to advocate for funding at regional level whilst working with international and local organisations on the possibility of alternative sources of complementary food assistance.

IMPACT OF REDUCED FOOD ASSISTANCE

Through the contingency planning exercise, it became evident that there are very limited contingency stocks available, making the funding shortfall for July and August even more serious.

The impact of reduced assistance was captured by WFP and its partners during March focus group discussions and the first quarter post-distribution monitoring exercise. Families reported various negative coping strategies including; reducing the number of daily meals, limiting meal sizes, buying food on credit, withdrawing children from school or relying on children to generate additional incomes. Continued reductions or cancellations of food assistance programmes could result in further negative coping strategies.⁶

With no mitigation possibilities, the impact of the reduction of food assistance will likely be reinforced. The preliminary results of the 2015 vulnerability assessment (VASyR),⁷ indicate a clear deterioration of the food security situation of Syrian refugees in country:

- Households have a higher dependency on external livelihood sources like food voucher, loans and credits.
- Percentage of households below the poverty line (3.84\$/person/day) has increased from 50% to 70%.
- Percentage of households below the Survival Expenditure basket has increased from 29% to 50%.
- Households applying severe and crisis coping strategies have increased from 28% to 67%
- Acceptable food consumption score has decreased 12%, down to 23%.
- Food secure households have decreased from 25% to 7%.
- Moderate food insecurity has almost doubled, from 12% to 24%.

⁵ Although these small charities may have limited capacity to fill food assistance gaps, extremely vulnerable individuals identified in their specific areas could potentially be referred to them.

⁶ Please refer to: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=122&Id=48

⁷ The preliminary results are based on a database cleaned at 85-90%.