



The food basket is harmonized and voucher values decrease by an average of 13 per cent across the region

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS:

Taking into account dietary preferences of Syrian refugees, economic options for food items with similar nutritional values and the availability of items in the region, the voucher food basket was harmonized across the region in 2014 and this month, the overall voucher value decreased by an average of 13 per cent in the five countries hosting Syrian refugees. Partners are collecting information to assess if and how the food voucher reductions made this month is affecting food consumption-based negative coping mechanisms.

In Egypt, food assistance reached 86,576 Syrian refugees this month and 19,500 barcoded cards were upgraded, benefitting 62,250 people. A total of USD 1.45 million was injected into the economy through vouchers and e-cards in January, however vouchers reduced in value by 30 per cent, from USD 24 to USD 17.

In Iraq, food parcels were distributed to more than 20,000 Syrian refugees in five camps and vouchers to almost 84,000 refugees in four camps, including Kawergosk camp where vouchers were distributed for the first time. This month, the voucher was USD 28.20 per person.

In Jordan, in preparation for snowstorm 'Huda', WFP loaded e-cards for 91,419 camp-based refugees and 440,924 refugees living in communities, enabling beneficiaries to purchase goods in advance of the harsh weather.

In Lebanon, more than 920,000 individuals benefitted from food assistance, with more than USD 18 million transferred through vouchers, ATM cards and e-cards for food. However, refugees received 70 per cent of the expected value of their food e-cards.

NEEDS ANALYSIS:

The majority of refugees from Syria rely on humanitarian food assistance as their primary source of food. Without such support, refugee vulnerabilities would increase, particularly affecting groups such as female-headed households, children, the elderly, those with chronic illness, and persons with disabilities. There is evidence of refugee households resorting to spending their savings, taking their children out of school to work, relying on credit, selling household assets, and reducing food intake. Pre-assistance baseline assessments of newly-arrived refugees and continuous post-distribution monitoring have indicated that the food assistance provided by 3RP Partners helps to stabilize and improve refugees' food consumption frequency and dietary diversity.

Simultaneous assessments in Jordan and Lebanon in communities hosting Syrian refugees show that the rural population is the least resilient to inflation and the emerging threats of environmental degradation, land and water scarcity, and climate change. There is need to build the resilience of poor smallholder farmers to the shocks and stresses that can affect their livelihood and food security. Action is needed now to help mitigate the adverse impacts of the crisis that threaten to undermine development gains in Syria neighbouring countries.



WFP Food voucher distribution in Egypt. Photo ©WFP

Sector Response Summary:



Syrian Refugees in the Region:



3RP Overall Funding Status:



USD 1 BILLION INJECTED INTO LOCAL ECONOMIES THROUGH FOOD VOUCHERS SINCE THE START OF THE CRISIS

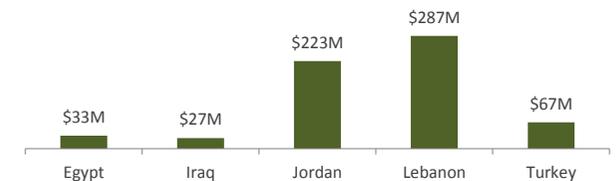
To address the identified needs of the beneficiaries in the region, the 3RP emphasizes the need to continue to provide food assistance to vulnerable refugees through vouchers and other mechanisms.

It is estimated that vouchers contributed USD 607 million to the local economies of the refugee hosting countries in 2014, with more than USD 1 billion injected since the start of operations.

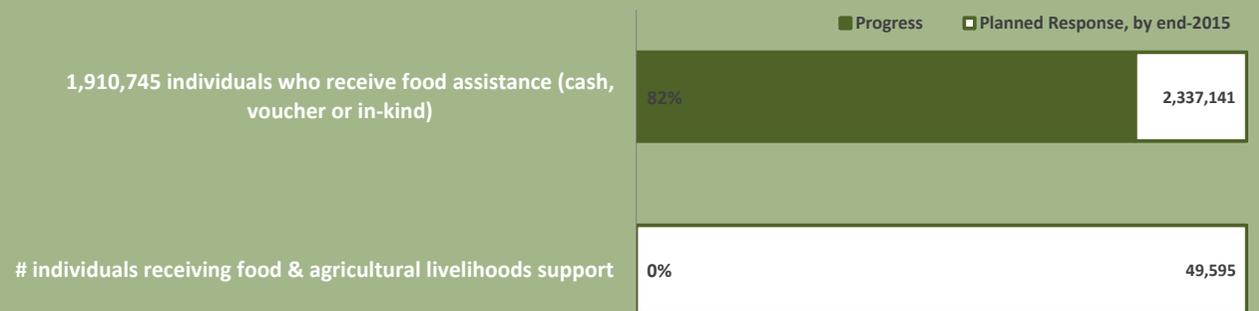
By the end of 2014, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan had transitioned from paper to e-vouchers whilst Iraq will pilot e-cards during 2015 and a wider roll-out of the current 60 per cent e-voucher coverage is planned in Egypt. The e-cards reflect a shift from physical food deliveries to vouchers.

E-cards are loaded on a monthly basis and can be redeemed at participating local stores, allowing families to buy the foods that fit their needs. This provides increased dignity and support to refugees, with a sense of a more normal lifestyle and ability to cope for their families, while at the same time supporting local economies.

USD amount injected into local economies through food vouchers in 2014



REGIONAL RESPONSE INDICATORS: JANUARY 2015



These dashboards reflect the achievements of the more than 200 partners, including governments, UN Agencies, and NGOs, involved in the 3RP response in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Targets are based on full funding of the 3RP and an expected 4.27 million refugees by end-2015.