



EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET (ESSN)

POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING SURVEY

ROUND 11

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCTE	CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER FOR EDUCATION
COVID-19	CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019
ESSN	EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET
ECHO	EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS
FCS	FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE
IFRC	INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES
ILO	INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION
IVS	INTERSECTORAL VULNERABILITY SURVEY
LCSI	LIVELIHOOD COPING STRATEGY INDEX
MEB	MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET
MOFSS	MINISTRY OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES
NUTS	NOMENCLATURE OF TERRITORIAL UNITS FOR STATISTICS
OECD	ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
PDM	POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING
RCSI	REDUCED COPING STRATEGY INDEX
TEM	TURKEY ECONOMIC MONITOR
TRC	TURKISH RED CRESCENT
TRY	TURKISH LIRA
TURKSTAT	TURKISH STATISTICAL INSTITUTE
WHO	WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES (IFRC)

The world's largest humanitarian network

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, reaching 150 million people in 192 National Societies, including Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılay) through the work of 13.7 million volunteers. Together, we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people.



TURKISH RED CRESCENT (TURK KIZILAY)

The largest humanitarian organization in Turkey

The Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılay) is the largest humanitarian organization in Turkey, to help vulnerable people in and out of disasters for years, both in the country and abroad. Millions of people currently receive support through our programmes in cooperation with the Government of Turkey. We are supporting vulnerable people impacted by disasters and other groups in need of humanitarian assistance.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



SUMMARY

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic (and related public health mitigation measures) has led to a negative impact on the global economy through job losses, trade disruptions and reduced movement of goods and people. Turkey was also largely affected by the pandemic where job losses reached 22 per cent for men and 20 per cent for women in the informal sector.¹ The easing of the COVID-19 restrictions in Turkey led to a return in economic growth in the second half of 2020, but the growth coincided with a rise in cost of living. The Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) for a 6-person household increased from 2,292 TRY in April 2020 to 2,598 TRY in January 2021, an indication of inflation which stood at around 17 per cent in May 2021.²

The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) provides unrestricted, unconditional cash assistance to refugees³ to help people meet their basic needs and mitigate the effects of economic shocks such as those described above. To understand the impact of the cash assistance provided to the refugee households as a means to assist them meet their basic needs, the IFRC and TRC conducts regular Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys. These surveys explore ESSN applicant's income, expenditure, debt and coping strategies at the household level and provide an analysis of trends between recipient and non-recipient households over time. The 11th in the series, this PDM survey adopted a cross sectional design and was conducted between November 2020 and January 2021 with a sample of 2,019 recipient and 1,965 non-recipients households. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents across five regions namely: Aegean, Istanbul, Anatolia/Thrace, Mediterranean and South East. The results are presented in comparison to that of PDM 10 (September 2020), and are representative for both recipient and non-recipient households at the regional and national level.

1 ILO, COVID-19 Küresel Salgınında Göçmen İşçileri Korumak. Politika belirleyiciler ve Ortaklar için tavsiyeler, Bilgi Notu.

2 Central Bank of Turkey, 'Consumer Price Index', accessible at: <https://www.tcmb.gov.tr/wps/wcm/connect/EN/TCMB+EN/Main+Menu/Statistics/Inflation+Data/Consumer+Prices>

3 Refugee is referring to foreigners who are under international protection or temporary protection according to the [Law on Foreigners and International Protection](#). Herein the term is used to refer to their legal status.

KEY FINDINGS



Income and Employment:

Some 76 per cent of ESSN recipient and 79 per cent of non-recipient households had a member who lost their employment due to COVID-19 and related mitigation measures. Both households' income excluding ESSN assistance and total expenditure **increased** for both ESSN recipients and non-recipients between PDM 10 and 11.



Debt:

The median amount of household debt was 1,900 TRY for ESSN recipients (**reduced** from 2,000 TRY in PDM 10) and 2,300 TRY for non-recipients (**increased** from 2,200 TRY in PDM 10).



Food:

Food was the main expenditure item constituting **41 per cent** share of total expenditure for ESSN recipients and **43 per cent** share of total expenditure for non-recipients and also the main reason why households acquired debt, reported by **87 per cent** for ESSN recipients and **84 per cent** for non recipients.

ESSN recipients and non-recipients experienced a **deterioration in their access to food**, both in terms of quantity and diversity reflected in reduction in the acceptable group of Food Consumption Score (FCS), even though food expenditure increased by **20 per cent** for ESSN recipients and **7 per cent** for non-recipients.



Coping Strategies:

Reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) and livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI) have increased for the ESSN recipients while reduced for the non-recipients.

Check out the "[Conclusions](#)" section of this report to learn more about the suggestions for improving the current situation.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme provides unrestricted, unconditional cash assistance⁴ to people living under temporary or international protection in Turkey to help them meet their basic needs. The ESSN is funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and implemented through a partnership of the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS), International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC). By January 2021, the ESSN has provided monthly assistance to 1.8 million people.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of ESSN assistance on socio-economic conditions of recipients with particular focus on their level of expenditure, debt, coping strategies and food consumptions. The study aims to track changes over time and compare these to the ones experienced by non-recipient households.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To measure to what extent the minimum expenses such as food, rent, utilities, non-food items (NFI), health, education, etc. are met
2. To determine how income, debt, and expenditure values are critical in understanding households' economic resilience
3. To determine the severity of coping strategies applied in case of having economic /financial difficulties
4. To assess how secure food consumption habits are



⁴ For more information, please visit: platform.kizilaykart.org or media.ifrc.org/ifrc/essn

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This PDM survey adopted a cross sectional survey design since it involves observations of a sample, or cross section, of a population or phenomenon that are made at one point in time. The unit of analysis chosen for the PDM is the household.

SAMPLE

Sample sizes for both ESSN recipient and non-recipients groups were calculated at 95 per cent confidence level and 5 per cent margin of error. PDM 11 was conducted between November 2020 and January 2021, capturing responses from 2,019 ESSN recipients and 1,965 non-recipients. Comparisons were done using the results from PDM 10 which was conducted between June and September 2020. Data was collected by enumerators from TRC's M&E unit in Gaziantep through phone surveys.

AREA OF STUDY

Considering that the ESSN is a nationwide programme with recipients spread across the different regions with diverse socio-economic statuses and with 80 per cent of the ESSN applicants being concentrated in 10 provinces, a nationwide sampling may lead to sampling errors. For a better estimation of study parameters, regional stratification based on the proportion of applicant households was applied. Black Sea, Eastern Anatolia, Central Anatolia, and Thrace Regions were combined as one stratum based on the similarities in the programme application figures and relatively in socio-economic dynamics. Besides, Istanbul, the main commercial city of Turkey, was accepted as a stratum by itself because of its distinct socio-economic status. The province is also considered an independent stratum by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat). Independent random samples were drawn from these five regions as per Figure 1.

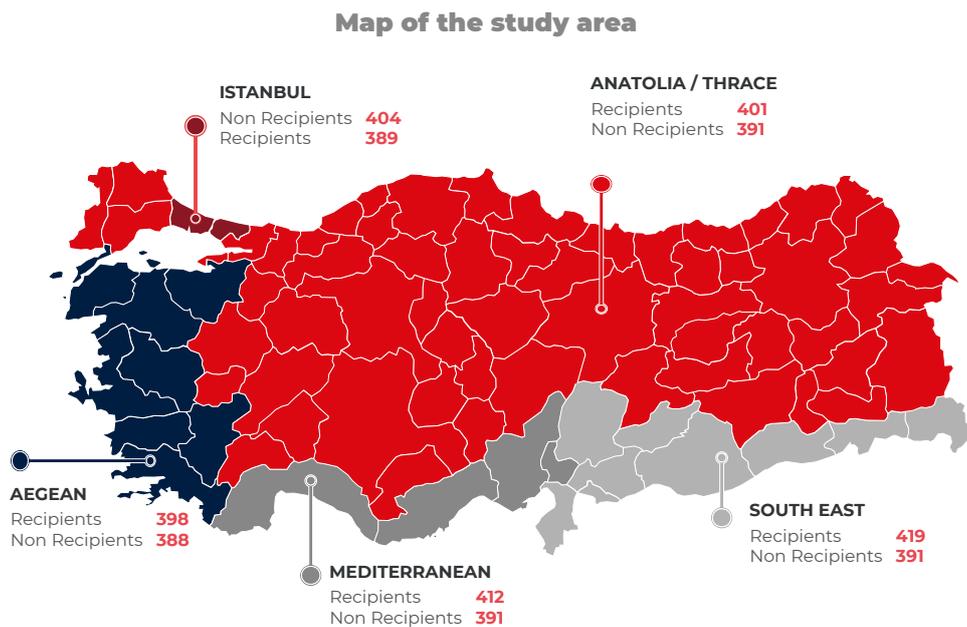


Figure 1

FINDINGS

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT



Some **76 per cent of the ESN recipients and 79 per cent of the non-recipients have experienced loss of employment** in their household because of COVID-19.

Household income has increased in PDM11 (January 2021) compared to PDM 10 (September 2020) for both ESN recipients and non-recipients.

Median Income excluding ESN assistance increased by **11 per cent** for non-recipients and by **50 per cent** for ESN recipients in PDM11.

The median monthly income excluding ESN and CCTE assistance was higher in PDM 11 for both ESN recipients (from 1000 TRY to 1500 TRY) and non-recipients (from 1800 TRY to 2000 TRY). The higher income observed for PDM 11 could be as a result of the increase in the number of working days with the ease of the COVID-19 measures in the country during summer and autumn 2020. Non-recipients maintained a higher monthly income⁵ compared to ESN recipients in both PDM 10 and 11, which can be explained as both the reason for and result of the programme design, targeting more vulnerable groups.

Total income excluding ESN and CCTE based on ESN status

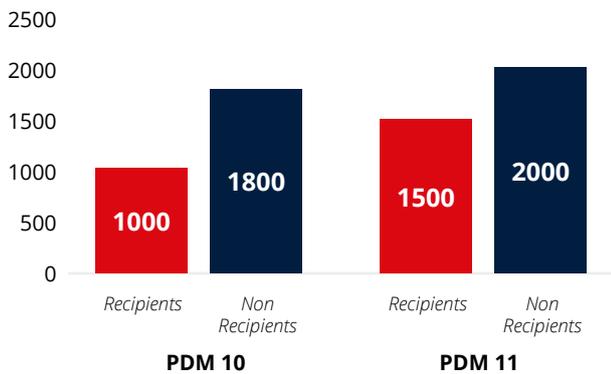


Figure 2

When income of households is considered, there are considerable differences across different regions.⁶ Ranging from 1,775 TRY to 2,500 TRY Istanbul and Aegean regions are the regions with the highest income for both recipient and non-recipient groups; while South East region has the lowest income. These results are similar to other national statistics revealing that the regional disparities were consistent with the income distributions in Turkey. According to TurkStat⁷, in 2019 South East Anatolia Region had the lowest median household disposable income while Istanbul had the highest.

5 Both PDM10 and 11 surveys sampled among the same population but they are independent samples. Hence, the Mood's Median test was used. the Mood's Median test has the same function as the Kruskal Wallis test, but provides a more robust estimation if there is an outlier in the dataset. Expenditure, debt and income variables were tested. According to test results, the null hypothesis is rejected due to the fact that the probability value is less than 0.05 at significance level. It was concluded that the total expenditure status differs depending on the ESN eligibility status.

6 Mood's Median tests were applied to see whether there is any differences or not. Therefore, total income and strata were tested and income differs according to strata.

7 TurkStat, Yıllık Kullanılabilir Hanehalkı Gelirinin Dağılımı (Ortalama, TL), available on <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn=65&locale=tr>, 2021b

Total income excluding ESSN & CTE based on ESSN status and regional strata

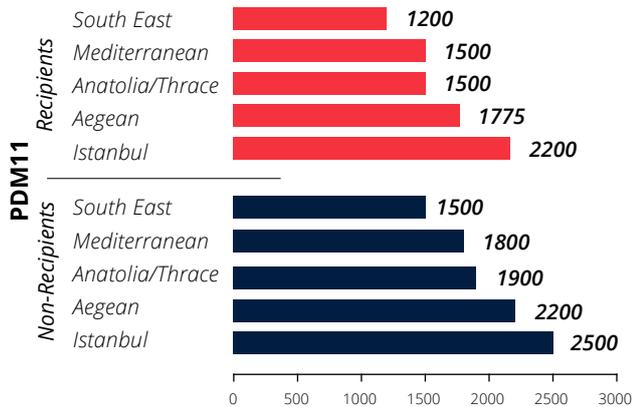


Figure 3

Seventy-six per cent of ESSN recipient households had a member who lost employment due to COVID-19

During the last months of 2020, as a response to curb the spread of COVID-19, series of mitigation measures were declared, including nationwide lockdowns and closure of most workplaces. As a result, employment losses were observed, especially in the hospitality and construction sectors⁸. From the PDM survey, 76 per cent of ESSN recipients and 79 per cent of non-recipients shared that at least one member has become unemployed in their households as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and related public health measures implemented to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. These findings are similar to those found in PDM 10. When World Bank's finding on slow recovery of informal sector from loss of employment in 2020⁹ is taken into consideration and also considering that in PDM11 49 per cent of ESSN recipients and 48 per cent of non-recipients rely on unskilled labour as main source of income, these findings may explain why the negative impact of COVID-19 on employment has remained the same in both PDM 10 and PDM 11.

Impact of COVID-19 on unemployment

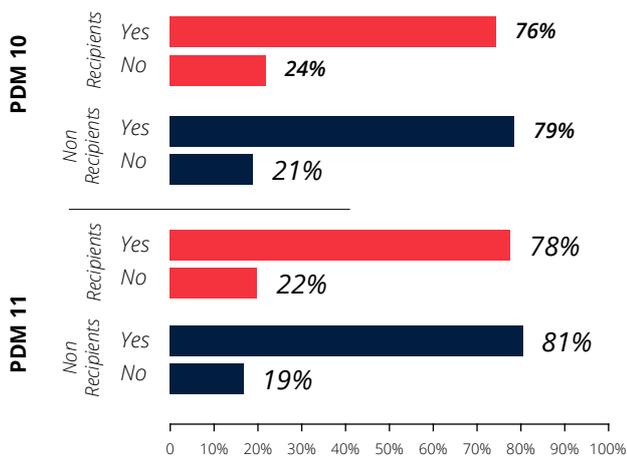


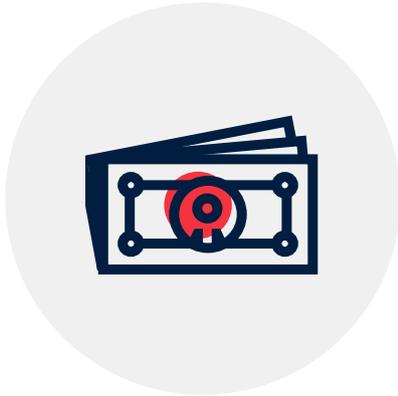
Figure 4



⁸ Caro, Luis Pinedo. "İkinci Dalga COVID-19 Önlemlerinin Türkiye'de İstihdam Üzerindeki Etkisi" ilo.org. ILO Türkiye Ofisi, Accessed 16 March 2021. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms_775756.pdf

⁹ World Bank.. Turkey Economic Monitor: Navigating the Waves, available on <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/04/27/economic-rebound-in-turkey-could-be-impacted-by-domestic-macroeconomic-volatility-and-evolving-global-uncertainties> , April 2021

EXPENDITURE



Median **household expenditure was higher in PDM 11 compared to PDM 10** for both ESSN recipients and non-recipients.

71 per cent of ESSN recipient and 78 per cent of non-recipient **households had their per capita expenditure above MEB.**

Total median household expenditure was 3,081 TRY for ESSN recipients and 2,981 TRY for non-recipients; approximately 18 per cent and 9 per cent higher than PDM 10 amounts for ESSN recipients and non-recipients respectively. The median per capita expenditure on the other hand was higher for non-recipients at 1,374 TRY compared with recipients at 1,257 TRY¹⁰ implying that on average the non-recipient households had higher level of expenditure.

Minimum Expenditure Basket

The Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) is the calculated monthly cost of basic needs for a household of six members. It is calculated based on estimations of the essential goods and services required, and adjusted, to ensure the household's food component provides basic nutritional requirements in line with Sphere standards¹¹. To assess the household relative poverty, per capita value of MEB is normally compared with the household per capita expenditure. If the household per capita expenditure is below the per capita MEB, then the household are assumed to fall below the poverty line. In this study, calculation of the per capita expenditure, relied on the square root scale¹².

For both groups, per capita MEB value remains below median per capita expenditure for majority of households. Seventy-one per cent of the ESSN recipients and seventy-eight per cent of non-recipient households had a per capita median expenditure above MEB, indicating a difference between the two groups.¹³ Further analysis reveal that 81.6 per cent of the ESSN recipients who had expenditure above MEB had acquired a new debt in the last 3 months, an indication that even though they are meeting their basic needs it is largely through debt and therefore not sustainable.

Comparison of households' expenditure and MEB

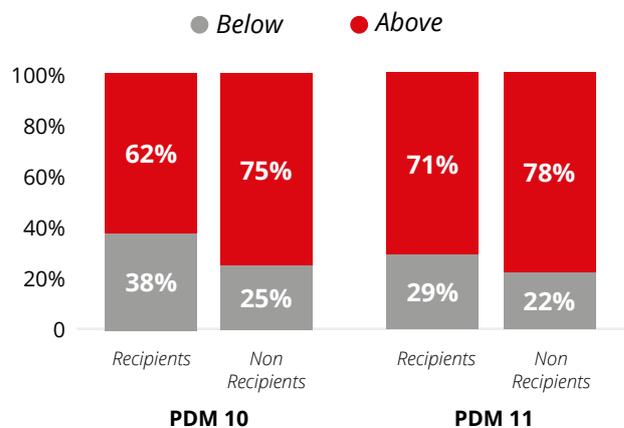


Figure 5

10 The Mood's Median test were used to determine whether medians are equal or not. According to test results the total expenditure status differs depending on the ESSN eligibility status.
 11 Sphere standards intend to ensure quality humanitarian response and accountability. MEB is estimated as the cost of acquiring enough food to meet energy requirements, usually 2,100 calories per person per day, as per the Sphere Standard. For more information please visit <https://spherestandards.org/humanitarian-standards/core-humanitarian-standard/>
 12 Square root scale (The equivalence scale) used in the OECD Income Distribution Database divides household income by the square root of the household size. This implies that, for instance, a household of four persons has needs twice as large as one composed of a single person.
 13 Pearson's chi-square were used to see whether there is any relationship between variable of and minimum expenditure basket. The test results show that there is a difference between both groups

Median total expenditure increased by 18 per cent for ESSN households

Compared with PDM 10, the total household expenditure was higher for both ESSN recipient and non-recipient households. Food, rent and utilities remained as the largest components of the household expenditure. The median food and utility expenditure were 20 per cent higher for ESSN recipient households, while median rent amount stayed the same. For non-recipients rent expenditure increased by nine per cent. On the other

hand, the median utility expenditure was around 40 per cent higher. The increase in food expenditure was rather moderate (20 per cent for ESSN recipients and 7 per cent for non recipients). The median total expenditure for ESSN recipients was 2,607 TRY for PDM 10 ¹⁴ and 3,081 TRY for PDM 11, with a 18 per cent increase. The increase in expenditure was significantly associated with the increase in income ¹⁵. In previous sections we saw there exists an income deficit for most households and even for those that have expenditure above MEB, they still had to rely on new debt to meet their expenditure to a large extent, highlighting the households difficulty in meeting their needs.

Median Expenditure for PDM11 and PDM10

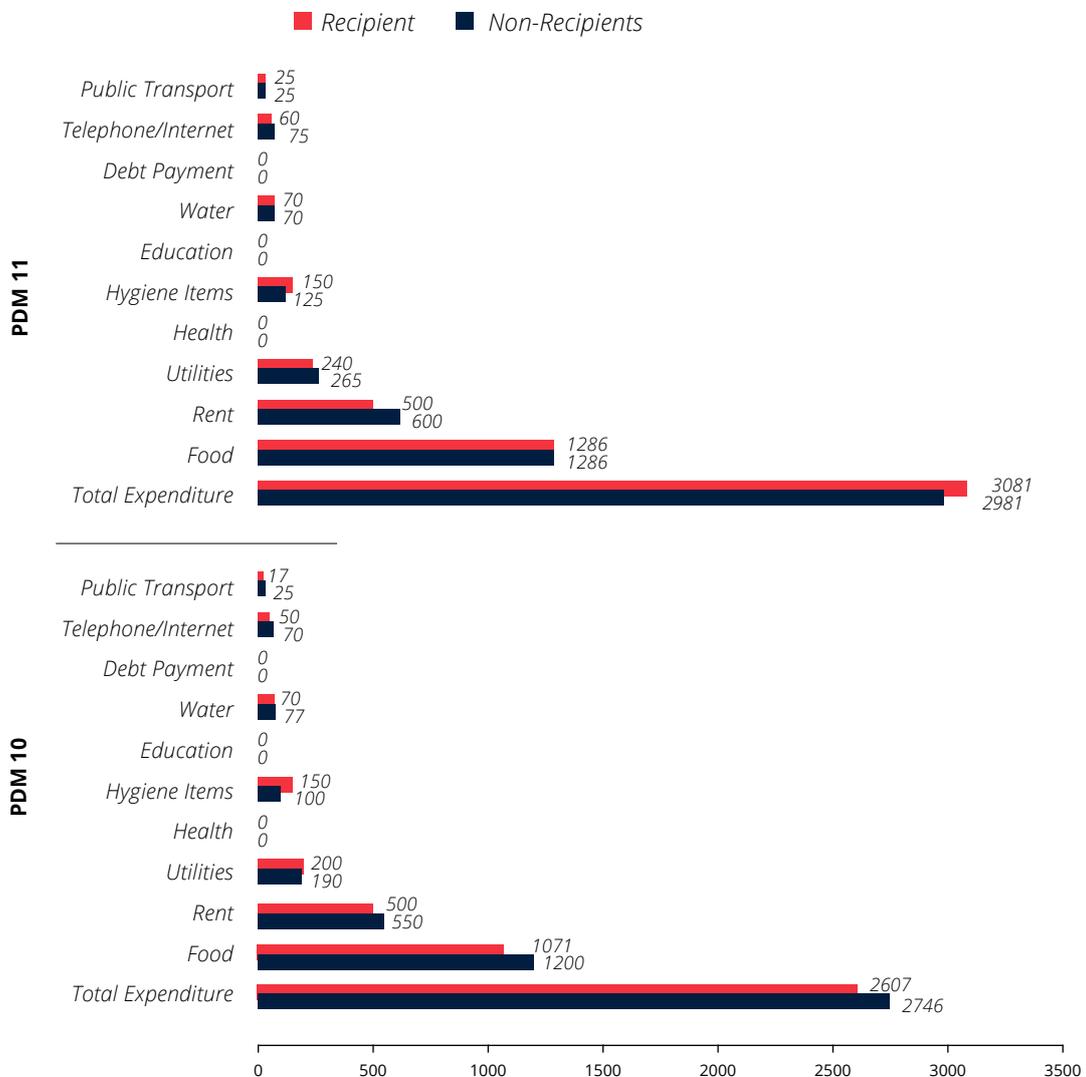


Figure 6

14 IFRC and TRC. "Cash Assistance in Times of COVID-19 - PDM10 Report". Accessed from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2021-ESSN-Cashintimesof-COVID19.pdf>

15 Spearman Correlation test were utilized to see relationship between variables of total income and total expenditure. As a result of this test, there are 36 per cent relationship between the variables of total income and total expenditure. This means that total income excluding ESSN and CCTE assistance was positively related to total expenditure

DEBT



Around 81 per cent of ESSN recipient households have debt, though the number of indebted households decreased by 3 per cent between PDM 10 and 11

Borrowing from friends and local shops were the main sources of debt, while food, rent and utilities were the main reasons for acquiring debt.

Percentage of households in debt was **slightly lower** in PDM11 for both ESSN recipients and non-recipients but still averaged around **80 per cent**.

In addition, 73 per cent of recipient households and 72 per cent of non-recipient households acquired new debts three months prior to the data collection period. These percentages are slightly lower as compared with PDM 10 results (76 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively).

Although reduced use of debt for a small percentage of households, as shown in Figure 7, could be an indicator of household financial improvement, it could also be as result of inability to afford higher amounts of debt as was shared during the focus group discussions.

Adoption of debt

Does the household have any debt?

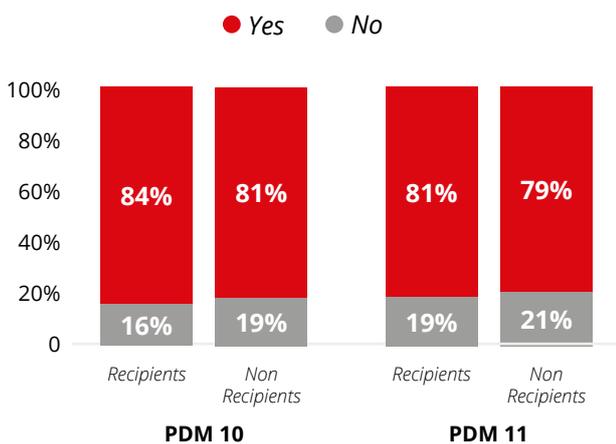


Figure 7

Borrowing money or buying goods on credit are some of the most frequently used strategies for ESSN applicants to cover their needs. PDM 11 found that 81 per cent of then ESSN recipient households were indebted, while this was 79 per cent for non-recipient households.



“

“We borrow form our relatives, people we know or people around us, however, the most importantly, we borrow for our basic needs. I mean, we do not borrow a lot, we cannot afford that anyways.”

– Male, Samsun, ESSN recipient

Level of debt was **lower** for the ESSN recipient households compared to those of ESSN non-recipients by 400 TRY

Median household debt decreased from 2000 TRY in PDM 10 to 1900 TRY in PDM 11 for recipient households. For non-recipient households the amount increased from 2200 TRY to 2300 TRY. Median amounts owed were different¹⁶, despite of the fact the percentage of households who have debt is not different¹⁷.

Amount of total debt in TRY

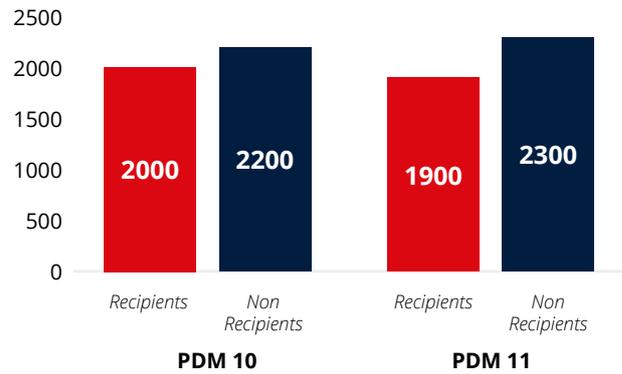


Figure 8

Households **mostly** borrow from friends or relatives and local shops

The two main sources of debt, both for ESSN recipient and non-recipient households were their friends or relatives and local shops. Seventy-four per cent of the ESSN recipient households were indebted to their friends or relatives, this was 81 per cent among non-recipients. On the other hand, 77 per cent of the ESSN recipients and 68 per cent of the non-recipients owed to local shops¹⁸. Below quote from FGDs on debt theme, reflects that relying on debt became unavoidable for families due to the COVID-19 pandemic and with the inflation, the amount received from KızılayKart remained short of covering essential expenses, and people had to borrow from their friends or local shops.

“

“You can’t make a living without borrowing. I used to work 20-22 days. Now, I work 12 days, and for the 18 days I am unemployed. [If] You cannot work, you have no money. You have to go somewhere, like the local shop. You borrow from them, saying that you will pay next month, either with salary or Kızılaykart. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, debt became a must. A year ago, Kızılaykart [assistance] could pay our rent and even a part of our expenses. Now, I just try to pay the rent with it (...) All people like us with average income rely on debt for their expenses.”

– Male, Samsun, ESSN recipient

16 The Mood's Median test were used to see whether there is any different in debt variable or not. According to test results the total debt differs depending on the ESSN eligibility status.
 17 Pearson's chi-square were applied. The test results show that there is no difference percentage of households who have debts in terms of ESSN recipient status
 18 The sum of percentages of the results from the samples is over 100 per cent because the respondents were allowed to provide multiple response on the sources of debt

Main sources for borrowing

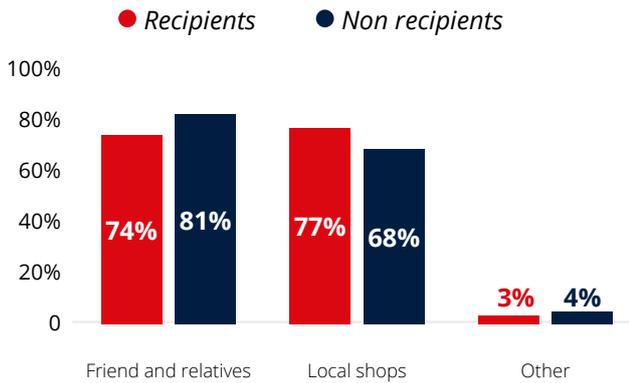


Figure 9

Food, rent and utilities were the main reason for acquiring debt

As presented in Figure 10, the main reasons for acquiring debt was to cover for basic needs such as food, rent and utilities. Among those who had debt, 87 per cent of ESSN recipients and 84 per cent of non-recipients acquired debt to buy food. Some 32 per cent of the recipient and 43 per cent of non-recipient households reported that rent was one of the reasons for their debt¹⁹. On the other hand, utilities were listed by 27 per cent of recipient and 34 per cent of non-recipient households. These suggest that debt is acquired for meeting basic needs; and buying food on credit is widely used among both groups. In the focus group discussions, some of the reasons for acquiring debt were discussed as having a single income earner in the household, work being irregular and income being low. Such concerns were reflected below:

Reason for acquiring debt

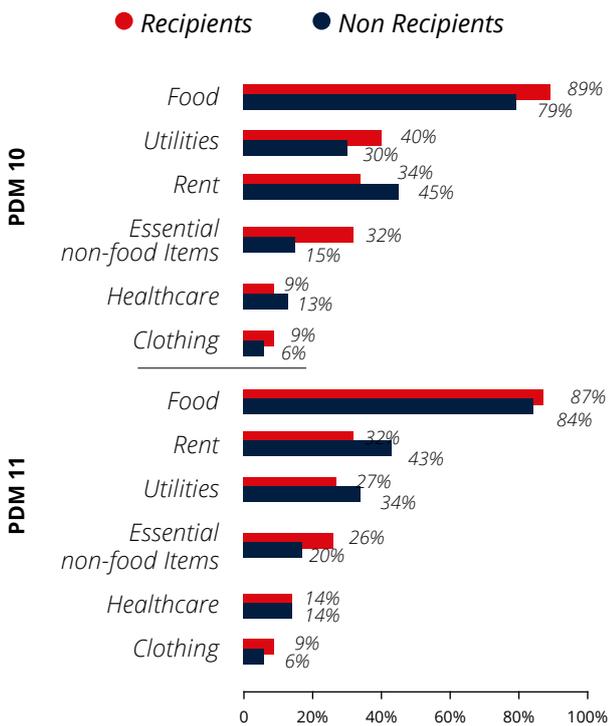


Figure 10

“ A person cannot cover their basic needs without being in debt. I borrow to buy my essential needs. I am the only one who works. No one helps me. Debt covers a part of my expenditure, but it does not cover it all. ”
 -Male, ESSN recipient, Hatay

In summary, although slightly reducing, it is very concerning that 81 per cent of households have debt. Given that the amount of households’ median debt for both groups was 300-400 TRY higher than households’ median income excluding ESSN and CCTE assistance, it can be concluded that most households are over indebted and in need for additional income or more assistance to reduce the reliance of borrowing as a coping strategy.

19 The sum of percentages of the results from the samples is over 100 per cent because the respondents were allowed to provide multiple response on the reason for acquiring debt

COPING STRATEGIES



rCSI score has increased since PDM 10 reflecting worsening food security conditions for ESN recipients. ESN recipients also had higher rCSI scores than non-recipients.

LCSI score higher among ESN recipient households compared to non-recipient households.

Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

Reduced Coping Strategies Index is a proxy indicator used to measure household level food insecurity. It includes five specific consumption coping strategies, each given a standard severity weight, and aggregated into an index. The strategies include relying on less preferred or cheaper food, borrowing food or relying on help from friends or relatives, reducing the number of meals eaten per day, reducing the portion size of meals and reducing the quantities consumed by adults so children can eat. A higher score of rCSI is an indication of worsening of food security standards for the households and vice versa.

Food security has worsened for ESN recipients

Reduced food security, reflected in increasing rCSI, have been observed for ESN recipient households between PDM 10 and 11 while there was slight improvement for the non-recipient group.²⁰ The increase in the rCSI index from 9.19 to 11.55 can be interpreted as ESN recipients adopting a whole range of negative food related coping strategies such as reduced food quantities consumed by adults, reduced meal portions or reduced number of meals taken in a day.

RCSI by ESN eligibility status

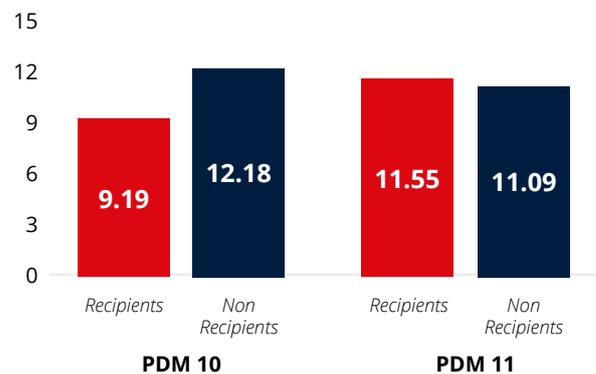


Figure 11

“ We already have reduced consuming most of the things. For example, we eat cheap food, such as bread, zahter [a blend of powdered thyme], molasses. We used to eat chicken once a week, now we eat once a month. We forgot to eat red meat We buy the cheapest food. We buy broken rice, we do not eat fruits. We cannot buy clothes, we cut down such expenses”
 – Male, ESN recipient, Ankara

20 Kruskal Wallis test were applied to see whether any differences in rCSI by ESN recipient status or not. As a result, rCSI differs depending on the ESN eligibility status.

As Illustrated in Figure 12, the most frequently adopted reduced coping strategy was reliance on cheaper and less preferred food, adopted by 76 per cent of both ESSN recipient and non-recipient households. The FGDs have revealed that certain food items such as meat or fruits are not affordable by many and they seek to buy the cheapest food as reflected in the quote alongside.

Between PDM 10 and 11, other reduced coping strategies adopted by an increasing percentage of ESSN households were reduction of food quantities consumed by adults so that children can eat (increased from 39 per cent to 48 per cent), reduction of meal sizes (increased from 28 per cent to 40 per cent) and reduction in the number of meals eaten in a day (increased from 30 per cent to 42 per cent). All of these suggest that despite the ESSN assistance, an increasing number of households were worse off when food security conditions were considered. This is possibly due to such strategies being easily accessible for households through which they reduce their expenditure. Such findings are alarming as they could have long-term implications for the physical development and health of children in these families.

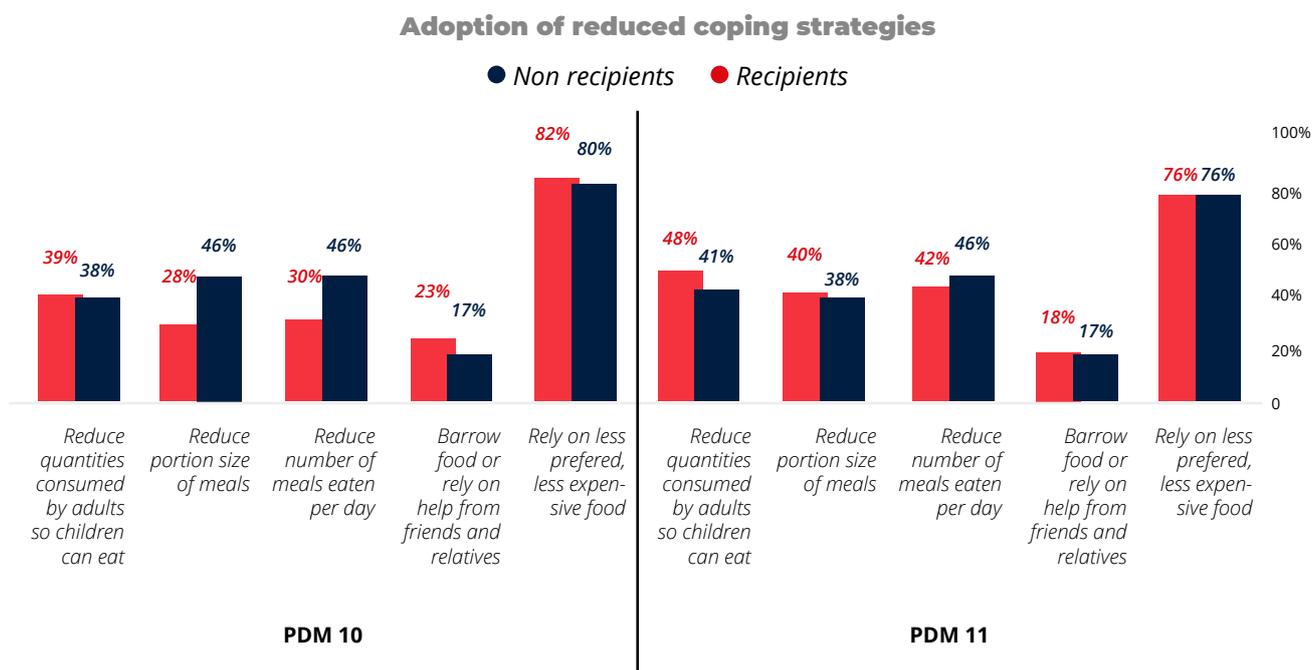


Figure 12

Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)

Livelihood-based coping strategy index aims to assess household level of livelihood and economic security based on income, expenditure and assets to have a better understanding of households' longer term coping capacities in response to economic shocks. To measure LCSI, participants were asked if, they had resorted to using any of the 13 pre-determined livelihoods coping strategies in the past month (listed in Figure 14) and these are combined into a weighted sum known as the Livelihoods Coping Strategy Index (LCSI).

Longer-term household coping and productive capacities (as reflected in increasing LCSI) deteriorated for ESSN recipients

Between PDM 10 and 11, there was a sharp increase in the LCSI for ESSN households from 3.57 to 4.31, reflecting that an increasing percentage of people adapted negative livelihood coping strategies.²¹ For non-recipient households, the index declined very slightly and was close to that of ESSN recipients at 4.25.

21 Kruskal Wallis test were applied to see whether any differences in LCSI by ESSN recipient status or not. As a result, LCSI differs depending on the ESSN eligibility status.

The livelihood coping strategies are categorized into three including stress, crisis and emergency coping strategies. Each component represents sets of behaviour with different degrees of severity.

Stress coping strategies constitute the least severe set of behaviours among components of the index. Buying food on credit was the most widely used strategy by 71 per cent of ESSN recipient and 61 per cent of non-recipient households followed by borrowing money to cover basic needs by 52-53 per cent of both groups. These findings also revalidates the high percentage of households in debt.

Crisis coping strategies are the set of behaviours that could be considered as moderate in terms of severity. Among these, reducing educational expenses was adapted by a much larger percentage of ESSN recipient households with 35 per cent compared with non-recipient households at 23 per cent. When it comes to reducing health related expenditure however non-recipient households adapted this strategy more at 39 per cent as compared with 32 per cent for recipient households. It is concerning that nearly four out of 10 ESSN assistance receiving households reduced health and education related expenses, nearly double that of in PDM 10. The quote alongside emphasizes how some people delayed health expenditures or chose to buy the cheapest medicine possible.

Emergency coping strategies constitute the most severe type of behaviour. Higher percentage of ESSN recipient households (16 per cent) sent their children to work than non-recipients (13 per cent). These per percentages are higher for both groups compared to PDM 10, indicating a concerning situation which must be explored further. In addition, higher percentage of non-recipient households (16 per cent) moved to another location.

LCSI by ESSN eligibility status

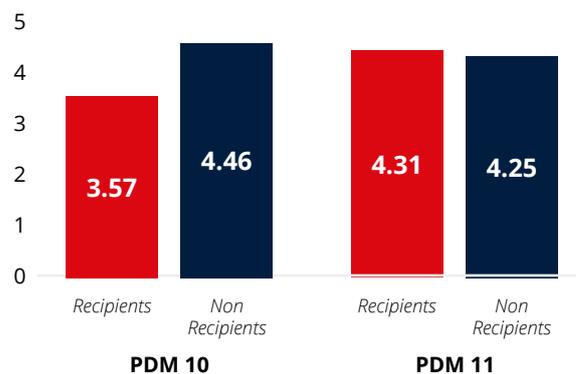


Figure 13

“
There are a lot of things that we can no longer do like going to a dentist and getting treatment. If I buy painkillers, I prefer the cheapest.
 – Female, ESSN non-recipient, Samsun

Adoption of livelihood coping strategies

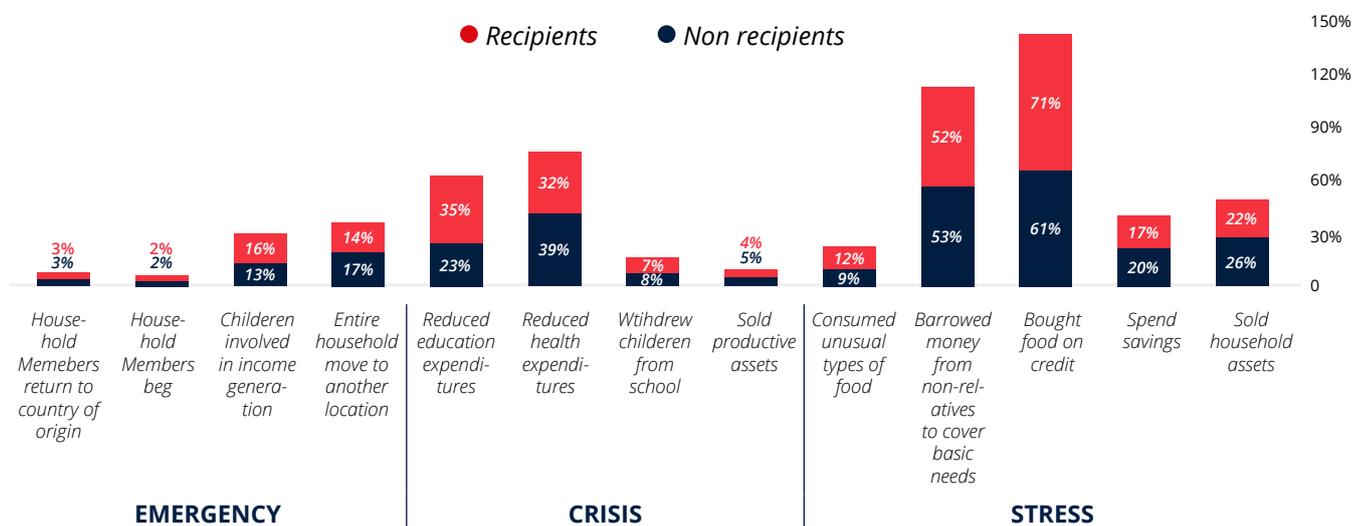


Figure 14

FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE



ESSN recipient households with an acceptable food consumption score reduced by 26 per cent between PDM 10 and 11.

Approximately 50 per cent of all households have poor or borderline food consumption scores.

Food Consumption Score (FCS) measures households' food consumption habits, the diversity and frequency of the food they consume in the last seven days, and then groups these figures under three categories, poor, borderline, and acceptable.

Both ESSN recipient and non-recipient households experienced a deterioration in their food consumption both in terms of quality, diversity and quantity

ESSN applicants' access to adequate and quality food has deteriorated significantly since PDM 10. Percentage of ESSN recipient households who had acceptable food consumption decreased from 77 per cent to 51 per cent; while for non-recipients this dropped from 64 per cent to 52 per cent. On the other hand, percentage of households with poor consumption score increased by 15 per cent for ESSN recipients and by 7 per cent for non-recipients. These are quite alarming as such coping mechanisms could have profound effects on children's physical development.

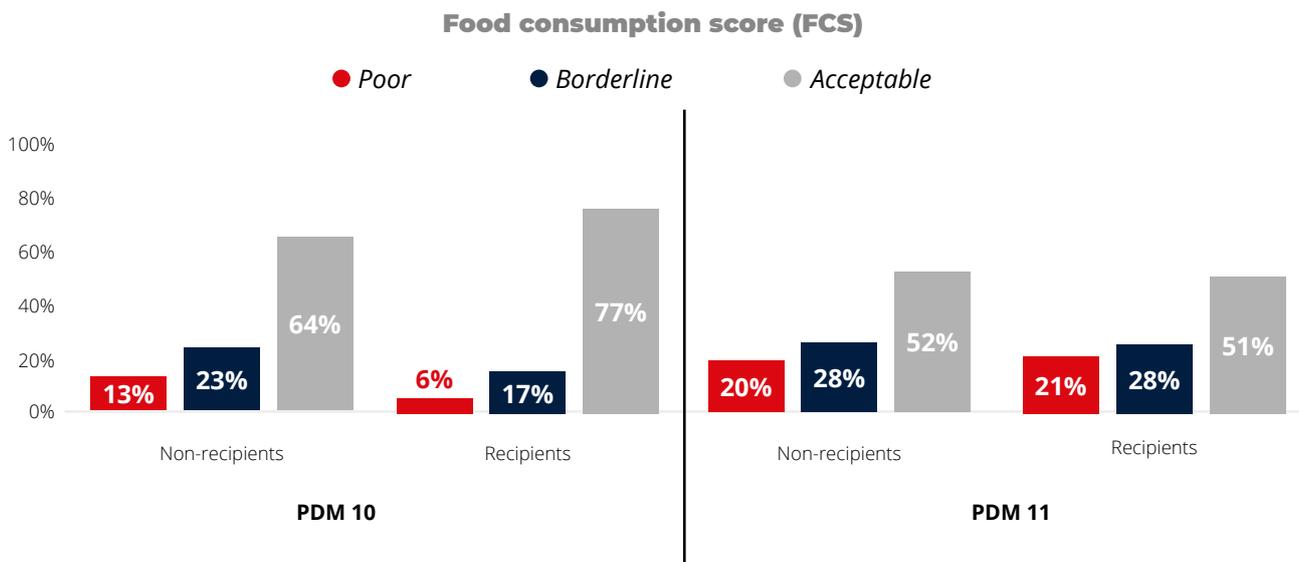


Figure 15

Conclusion

According to PDM 11 findings, non-recipient households were better in terms of having higher income and lower in LSCI and RCSI scores than PDM 10 compared with ESSN recipient households, who relied on coping strategies more than before. The FCS also deteriorated more for ESSN recipients more than non-recipients, even though the level of expenditure on food was higher. About 93 per cent of the ESSN recipients shared that they required additional assistance. The only indicator that the ESSN recipients had lower scores than the non-recipients was on the level of debt. The ESSN households had lower median debt compared to the non-recipients, but this could also be as a result of the non-recipients having more income and so being able to afford taking up more debt.

Although PDM 10 indicated that ESSN recipients were in a better condition in terms of lower adoption of coping strategies compared to non-recipients, PDM 11 showed that the negative impact of the ongoing pandemic has become apparent for ESSN recipients as well. To cope with the overall deterioration of financial situation of ESSN recipients, compounded by the negative financial impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the ESSN programme increased the transfer value amount from 120 TRY to 155 TRY per person, with the first transfer being completed in April 2021. The following are the recommendations for further focus in future:



Worsening conditions of food consumption of ESSN applicants during the pandemic is one of the major findings of this study. Food expenditure has been increasing but the food consumption scores and food related coping strategies indicate aggravation of access to food, both in terms of diversity and quantity. Therefore, scoping the possibility of conducting a consumer preference study is needed to further understand the spending habits of refugees on basic needs, the overall needs of the households and a possible relationship with vulnerabilities. Going beyond macroeconomic indicators, this could focus on regional and community-based dynamics of the markets.



ESSN assistance remains an essential tool for supporting households to meet their basic needs. Alongside ESSN assistance, advocating for additional support especially for those who are not eligible according to ESSN criteria yet still in need, such as assistance already being provided by TRC and through links with other local humanitarian organisations could also be considered. This could serve as a short-term solution to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic as well as to support the well-being and financial recovery of refugees. In addition, ESSN programme could also explore the possibility of increasing its coverage through additional top-ups for the ESSN recipients.



Bridging the gap between income and expenditure is essential for households to have financial control and to reduce the need to rely on debt and other coping mechanisms to cover for the gap. Diversifying income sources in addition to the ESSN assistance would be an important strategy to mitigate this gap. The livelihood referrals component of the ESSN programme is a critical avenue that could support people in this regard. The programme should also consider having a gradual exit for eligible households leaving the ESSN or to provide them with incentives that may prevent them from the impacts that may occur as a result of abrupt end of assistance.

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