

Continued underfunding sees a reduction in the value of food assistance across the region

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

Underfunding meant that beneficiary numbers and voucher values for food assistance continued at reduced levels in most countries in the region this month.

In Lebanon, the food voucher value provided was only 70 per cent of the entitlement for the second month in a row (USD 19 instead of USD 27 per person per month). In Iraq, the value of the food voucher fell further in February, to USD 19 from USD 28.20 per person per month. Funding constraints have also forced the voucher value to be reduced by 30 per cent in Egypt this year, although the number of beneficiaries increased slightly in February to 87,838. In Turkey, the number of beneficiaries assisted under the e-food card programme was reduced from 220,000 to 154,000 due to funding constraints during February. In Jordan, the food voucher value for Syrian refugees living in the community was maintained at JOD 13 per person, while refugees in camps and transit centres continued to receive the planned value of JOD 20 per person.

Despite the reductions in most countries, food assistance through e-card and voucher modalities still injected significant funds into local economies. So far this year, USD 21.5 million worth of voucher assistance has been provided in Jordan and over USD 2.8 million in Egypt. In Lebanon, the amount injected into local economies was USD 16.8 million in February alone.

In the agriculture sector in Lebanon, trained facilitators supported 500 small-scale farmers with technical trainings and handling of materials and equipment to carry out poultry activities. In Iraq, it has been reported that many refugee families have slaughtered their animals for sale because of an inability to maintain them and out of a desperate need for cash.

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.



In-kind assistance in Qushtapa camp, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. WFP/Sepideh Soltaninia

Sector Response Summary:



2,585,000 Refugees & Local
Community Members targeted for
assistance by end-2015
1,861,630 assisted in 2015



Syrian Refugees in the Region:



4,270,000 Syrian Refugees
expected by end-2015
3,855,887 currently registered or
awaiting registration



3RP Overall Funding Status:



USD 4.5 billion
required in 2015 (Agencies)
USD 259.56 million received in 2015



VARIOUS FOOD ASSISTANCE MODALITIES REACH 1,859,130 PEOPLE THIS MONTH

Despite funding shortages leading to reductions in the number of people who could be helped this month, 1,859,130 people were reached with food assistance.

While vouchers and e-cards are accounting for more and more of the food assistance delivered in the region, in-kind distribution and other modalities also continue to be used.

In Lebanon, e-cards account for around 95 per cent of the caseload, ATM cards for four per cent, and in-kind food parcels for one per cent of beneficiaries.

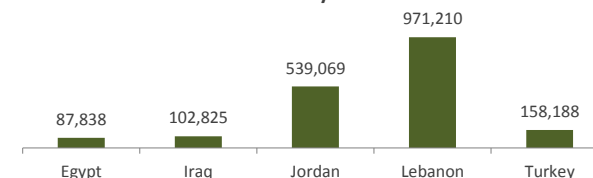
In Jordan, where the majority of food assistance is provided in the form of vouchers, around 9.5 million pieces of bread were still distributed to Syrian refugees in Zaatari and Azraq camps in February.

In Iraq, vouchers are provided in five camps and in-kind assistance in five camps. For almost 4,000 refugees outside of camps an in-kind ration is provided.

In Turkey, in addition to the e-card programme, food kitchens in Suruc and Gaziantep together support around 11,000 refugees each month with meals.

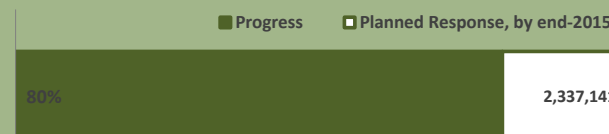
Egypt's sole modality is cash assistance, which reaches 84,409 Syrian refugees and 3,429 Palestine refugees from Syria as at February.

Total beneficiaries of food assistance (all modalities)
February 2015



REGIONAL RESPONSE INDICATORS: JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2015

1,859,130 individuals receiving food assistance (cash, voucher or in-kind)



500 individuals received food & agricultural livelihoods support



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. All data on this Dashboard is current as at 28 February 2015.