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TÜRK KIZILAY

COMPLEMENTARY EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET (C-ESSN) PROJECT

FINDINGS OF POST DISTRUBUTION MONITORING SURVEY (ROUND 4)

KIZILAYKART PROGRAMMES

01 Executive Summary
02 Survey Methodology
03 Findings
04 Conclusion

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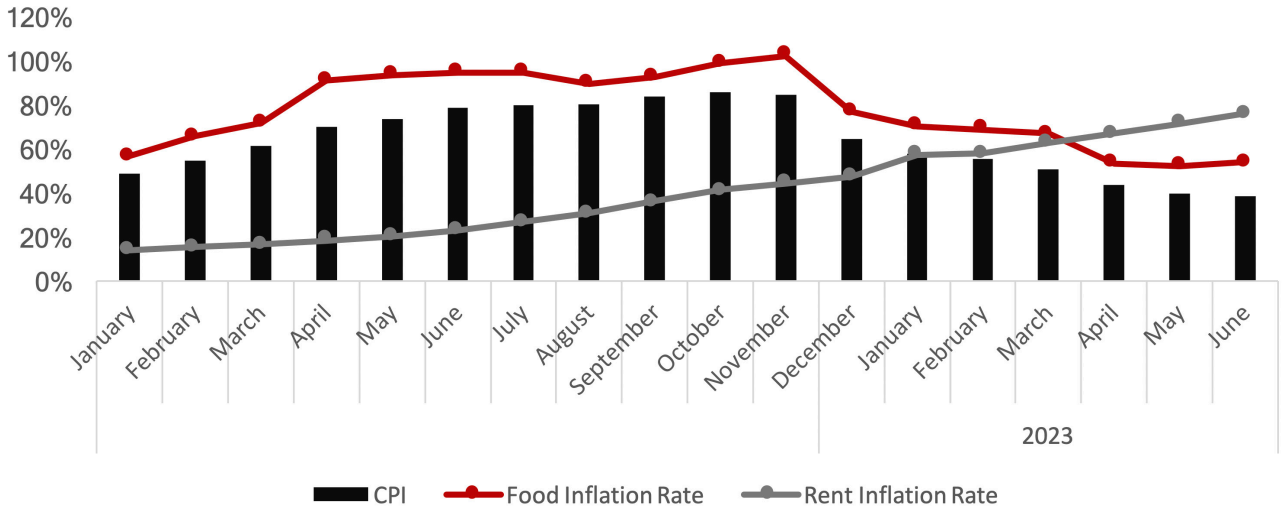
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Notably, starting from November 2021, Türkiye's economic picture has been undergoing changes, typified by a significant and steady increase in the annual inflation rate, but it is remarkable to highlight that the global economy is also grappling with severe economic crises. Nevertheless, it is essential to stress that it emerged against the backdrop of global crises that have been ongoing since 2018 and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Increasing trends all over the world have put significant pressure on the cost of living, particularly affecting basic expenditures such as food, housing and utilities. Moreover, the country's national economy was adversely influenced by the catastrophic and fierce Kahramanmaras earthquakes and other devastating global disasters.



Graph 1: ***Monthly Inflation, Food and Rent rates***

The immediate impact was deeply felt in the directly affected provinces, while reverberations spread to indirectly affected regions. These seismic events have revealed a new economic layer affecting Türkiye's economic stability. Despite these efforts, economic flactuations persist, as witnessed globally, and continue to test the resilience of Türkiye's economic structure.

Türkiye currently hosts 4 million vulnerable people as a response, the Government of Türkiye offers temporary or international protection, while also ensuring that once they are registered with the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM), people are granted access to essential services such as healthcare and education.

To support the Government's efforts, the Complementary ESSN (C-ESSN) Project intends to improve the living standards of the most vulnerable people under Temporary and International Protection as well as Humanitarian Residence Permit holders and International Protection applicants in Türkiye through the provision of regular cash assistance to cover their basic needs. By issuing a debit card (KIZILAYKART) to beneficiary households, the Project ensures a fixed monthly cash assistance. The Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) will be the primary proponent of this Project, with financial backing from the European Union (EU). Türk Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent) will participate collaboratively as the secondary proponent.

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of KIZILAYKART cash assistance and the Kahramanmaras earthquakes on the socio-economic conditions of most vulnerable households with a particular focus on their level of expenditure, income, debt, coping mechanisms, and food consumption patterns. Therefore, this study aimed to identify and observe changes in newly arisen vulnerabilities after earthquakes.

Objectives of the study include measuring the degree to which basic necessities like food, rent, utilities, non-food items (NFI), health, education, etc. are satisfied. Secondly, the study aims to determine how income, debt, and expenditure values are critical in comprehending the economic resilience of households. Thirdly, it seeks to gauge the severity of coping strategies applied in case of having economic/financial difficulties. The fourth focus is to analyse the security of food consumption habits, and finally, to assess the impact of earthquakes on the households living standards.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This PDM survey was implemented as a panel study within the framework of PDM 3 covering the same households as the previous PDM 3 survey. The main objective of this research is to assess the impact of the changing socioeconomic situation nationwide and the impact of the Kahramanmaras earthquakes on households that had previously participated in the survey. Households were selected as the designated unit of analysis for the PDM survey, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the effects of these earthquakes on the living conditions and overall well-being of the respondents.

SAMPLE

The sample sizes for the C-ESSN Project were determined with a rigorous framework, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a 5 % margin of error. The Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM), known as PDM 4, took place between May 2023 and July 2023, capturing responses from 1,106 households. Comparisons were done using the results from PDM 3 which was conducted between November 2022 and January 2023. This approach allowed for the observation of changes over time, particularly in response to the impact of the earthquakes. Data was collected by enumerators from Türk Kızılay Call Center (168) in Gaziantep through phone surveys.

AREA OF STUDY

The sampling design of the C-ESSN has been designed considering the minimum required sample size per strata that allows disaggregation of the baseline information by geographical regions and by criteria of the C-ESSN. Since the C-ESSN population is dispersed all over Türkiye, to implement a representative survey, which has nationwide coverage, regional stratification is applied. In this respect, four strata have been determined geographically based on the proportion of the C-ESSN households. For survey design, operational challenges have always become an issue when conducting a nationally representative survey on a large scale. To avoid them, some of the regions were merged, considering the proportions of the C-ESSN population and these regions' socio-economic dynamics. Besides, Istanbul, the main commercial province of Türkiye, 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 four regions as per Figure 1.

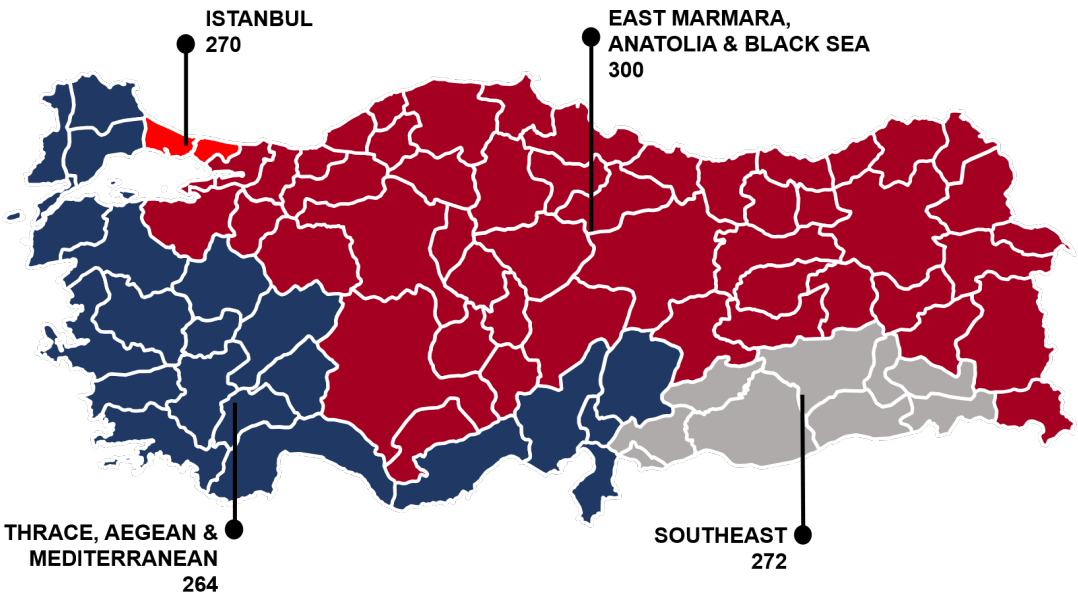


Figure 1: ***Map of Study Area***

FINDINGS

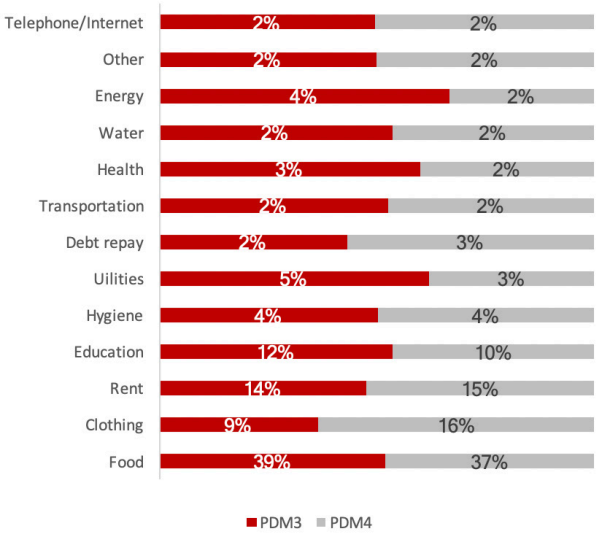
SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

INCOME

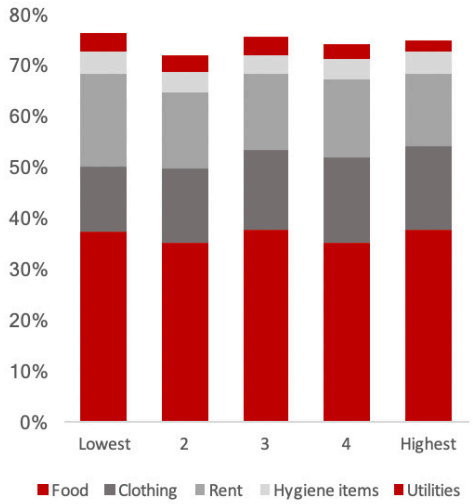
From PDM 3 to PDM 4, median household income for paid labor raised from 3.000 TRY to 4.500 TRY for the C-ESSN households. Moreover, even though the household's median income amounts were raised, debt and expenditures also escalated together with their income, as explained in the following sections. Compared to Istanbul, the region with the highest household income amount (8.500 TRY), Thrace, Aegean and Mediterranean region has considerably lower income (4.900 TRY) for the C-ESSN households[1]. Based on the PDM 4 results, unskilled labor, KIZILAYKART and skilled labor were top three income sources. Furthermore, this section analyzes income trends in provinces affected and unaffected by earthquakes. The analysis reveals that the median income of households in affected provinces increased by approximately 67 percent, while the median income for non-affected provinces increased by approximately 47 percent between PDM 3 and PDM 4.

EXPENDITURE

Median household expenditure has increased 39 percent from PDM 3 to PDM 4. Istanbul had the highest median household expenditure amount (12.681 TRY) among the regions, followed by Thrace, Aegean and Mediterranean (10.572 TRY). Additionally, there has been a decrease in the difference in total median expenditures between affected and unaffected households. When the details of the expenditure items are analysed, the five main expenditure items of households are food, rent, clothing, utilities, and hygiene items respectively. Compared to PDM 3, it has been observed that the share of clothing expenditures has become 10 percent. Median food expenditures have increased from 2.571 TRY to 3.000 TRY due to inflation in food prices.



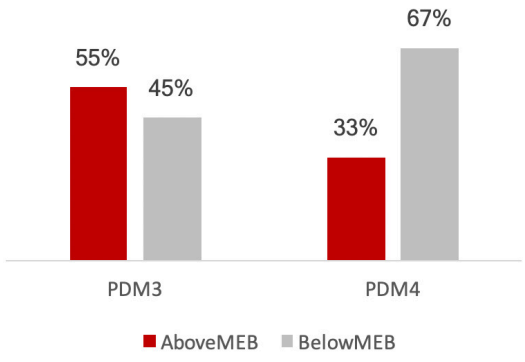
Graph 2: ***Expenditure Items Top 8***



Graph 3: ***Expenditure Share According to Income Level***

When investigating household consumption habits according to income levels, it has been found that their expenditure priorities are similar. For instance, the percentage of food expenditure among total expenditure ranges between 35 percent and 38 percent, and the share of hygiene expenditures is 4 percent among different income groups. Therefore, the percentage of expenditure items remains the stable in total expenditure, even if income levels change.

1 Mood's Median test were used to measure whether there is any relationship between the variables of total income and region. According to test results the null hypothesis is rejected due to the fact that the probability value is less than 0.05 significance level. It was concluded that the income amounts differ in terms of region.



Graph 4: ***MEB Levels compared to PDMs***

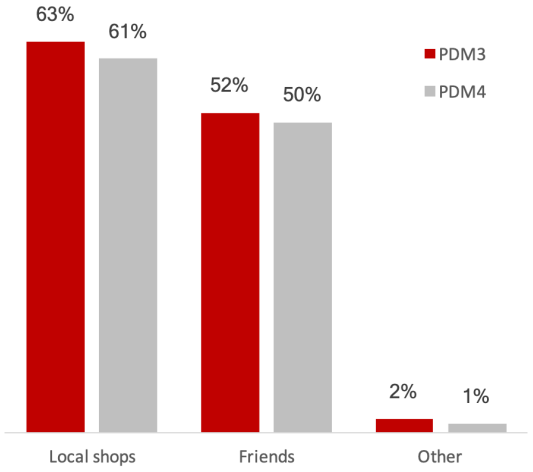
The analysis reveals an intriguing trend, despite an observed increase in households' expenditures, there has been a notable decline in the proportion of households capable of meeting their fundamental needs. Specifically, the findings indicate that the percentage of the C-ESSN households positioned above the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) has shrunk from 55 per cent to 33 per cent between the PDM 3 and PDM 4 studies. The primary reason for the significant rate of change in PDMs may be attributed to households reducing their expenditures, largely due to assistance provided in various forms, such as in-kind support or cash. This trend is consistent with the data from PDM 4, where a notable majority of affected households indicated a reduction in their expenditures. It is also observed that almost more than 70% of affected households below the MEB.

In other words, a significant portion of households that were previously able to surpass or fulfil the benchmark of minimum essential expenses have experienced a decline in this ability. This change suggests a complex interplay between increased expenditures and the overall capacity of households to adequately cover their basic necessities, potentially pointing to shifting financial dynamics and challenges within this group.

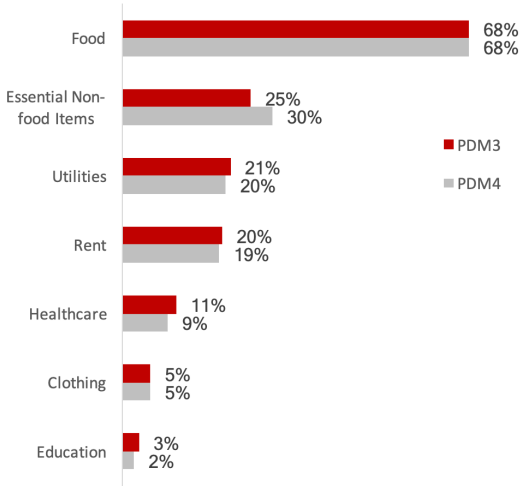
DEBT

As for the households receiving C-ESSN, the median amount of debt increased significantly, from 2700 TRY to 4000 TRY. One interesting observation about the prevalence of household debt is that there is a decline in the share of households with debt. In PDM 4, seventy-five percent of the C-ESSN beneficiary households have debt, representating contrast from the seventy-nine percent observed in PDM 3. Interestingly, while the share of households with debt remained stable in the Istanbul compared to PDM 3, it decreased in other regions. Especially the Southeast, Mediterranean, Aegean and Thrace regions all experienced a decline in the share of debt-burdened households. Meanwhile, the debt ratio increased in Anatolia, Black Sea, Eastern Anatolia and Eastern Marmara regions.

Households adopt a strategy that reflects the patterns observed in previous PDM studies. The results capture that a significant share (61 percent) of debt is borrowed from local shops and a significant share (50 percent) is borrowed from friends. It is also noteworthy that the C-ESSN households' resort to borrowing primarily to meet their most basic needs such as food, rent, utilities, essential non-food items and health expenditures. This suggests that despite financial hardship, there is a conscious effort to meet critical needs, often turning to familiar sources such as local shops and friends for support.



Graph 5: ***Sources of debt comparison on PDMs***

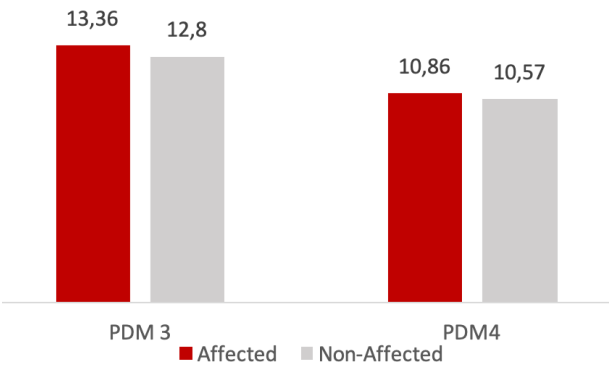


Graph 6: ***Comparison of reasons for debt on PDMs***

COPING STRATEGIES

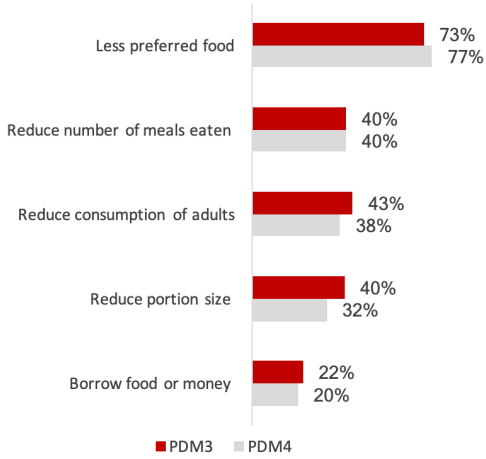
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)[2] is often used as a proxy indicator of household food insecurity[3]. As part of the analysis of this study, the average calculated rCSI score was 10.70, illustrating the to which extent households had to apply coping strategies.



Graph 7: ***rCSI scores change according to earthquake affected status***

Moreover, the findings from PDM 4 show a statistically significant decline in the rCSI score for the C-ESSN households, from 13.09 to 10.70, which is compared to the previous PDM 3 results ($p<0.05$). Furthermore, there is no statistically significant difference in rCSI scores between affected and non-affected provinces[4]. In contrast, the less preferred strategy is borrowing food or money. These indicate that households tend to prioritize managing their food consumption by adopting less preferred food options, while borrowing food or money is seen as a less preferred option, possibly due to its potential impact on debt or future burden.



Graph 8: ***Components of the rCSI Compared to PDM 3***

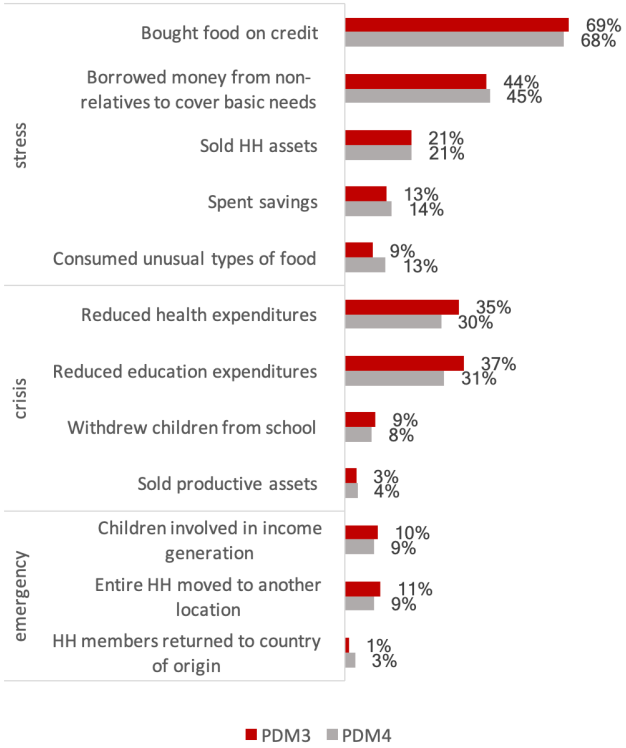
2 Maxwell et al. (2003). "The Coping Strategies Index: A Tool for Rapid Measurement of Household Food Security and the Impact of Food Aid Programs in Humanitarian Emergencies". Field Methods Manual. Developed for CARE Eastern and Central Africa Regional Management Unit (CARE-EARMU) and World Food Programme Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) Unit. For more detail information; http://www.fao.org/3/ae513e/ae513e.pdf

3 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

4 The median two-test was used to measure whether there was a significant difference in rCSI scores between PDM studies and affected or non-affected provinces. According to test results the null hypothesis is rejected due to the fact that the probability value is less than 0.05 significance level. It was concluded that the rCSI scores differ in terms of region and PDMs.

Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)

The PDM 4 monitoring study sheds light on the livelihood coping strategies[5] that the C-ESSN beneficiaries use in response to different levels of challenges they face. These strategies are classified as stress coping, crisis coping and emergency coping[6]. Overall the LCSI score has decreased from 3,91 to 3,67 for the C-ESSN beneficiary households. However, it was observed that affected households were much more likely to use livelihood coping strategies. The LCSI score of the affected households has decreased slightly to 3,88 compared to PDM 3.



Graph 9: ***Components of LCSI Compared to PDM 3***

Stress coping strategies: The data reveals that buying food on credit (68 percent) and borrowing money (45 percent) are the most frequently adopted measures. Additionally, selling household assets (21 percent) is another strategy used by households to manage stressful situations.

Crisis coping strategies : Moving to crisis coping strategies, C-ESSN beneficiaries have made specific adjustments. Education expenditures have seen a reduction to 31 percent, while health expenditures have decreased to 30 percent as part of their crisis-coping approaches.

Emergency coping strategies: For emergency coping strategies, the survey results indicate that two prominent strategies are the relocation of the entire household to a different area (9 percent) and children engaging in income-generating activities (9 percent). However, it's noteworthy that the utilization of both of these strategies has decreased compared to the previous PDM 3 results.

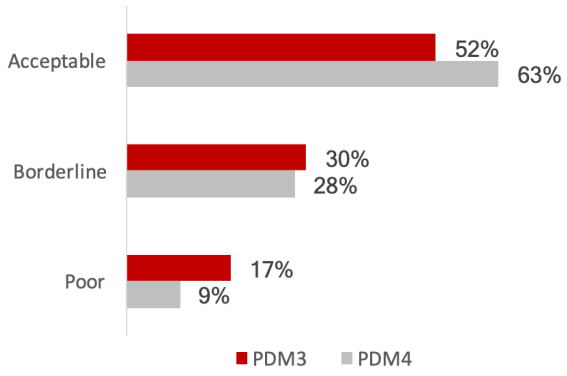
5 Livelihood-based coping strategy index aims to assess household level of livelihood and economic security based on income, expenditure and assets to have a better understanding of households' longer-term coping capacities in response to economic shocks. The livelihood coping strategies are categorized into three including stress, crisis and emergency coping strategies. Each component represents sets of behavior with higher degree of severity, respectively

6 The severity weights are: (1) for stress coping strategies, (2) for crisis coping strategies, (3) for emergency coping strategies. The weighted sum of this variable is then calculated to obtain the LCSI score. A higher value of LCSI is an indication that the household is experiencing food and economic insecurity.

FOOD SECURITY

Food Consumption Score (FCS)

Food Consumption Scores (FCS)[7] were used in this study to measure participant households' food security levels. Upon analyzing PDM 4, a promising trend emerges. The proportion of households with acceptable food consumption scores has been steadily increasing. Notably, the percentage of households achieving an acceptable level of food consumption rose from 52.2 percent to 62.7 percent, while the poor category witnessed an 8.5 percent reduction. This positive shift can be attributed to a significant uptick in food expenditures among households benefitting from the C-ESSN Project. Upon examining the different levels of food consumption scores among the affected households, 60 per cent maintained an acceptable level, 29 per cent were borderline, and 11 per cent were classified as poor. Although, the food expenditures of the affected households are lower, the lack of large negative changes in their food scores and a large proportion of these households are below the MEB, their food scores have not changed significantly can be explained by by assistance like in-kind, cash etc.



Graph 10: ***Food Consumption Groups levels by PDM's***

In essence, the study reveals an encouraging improvement in food security, as reflected in the higher prevalence of acceptable food consumption scores. This outcome underscores the positive impact of increased food expenditures, facilitated by the C-ESSN initiative, on enhancing the overall food security situation among the surveyed households.

7 The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a widely used metric in the field of food security and nutrition assessment. It assesses the quality and diversity of a household's diet by analyzing their food consumption patterns over a specific period of time. The FCS is a useful tool for identifying populations at risk of malnutrition and designing targeted interventions to improve food security and nutrition outcomes.

CONCLUSION

With the devastating Kahramanmaraş earthquakes that hit the Southeast region of Türkiye, 16 million people in over 11 provinces have been affected, including 50 percent of the total the C-ESSN beneficiaries. Hence, understanding their condition after earthquakes is essential to detect and respond to new vulnerabilities that emerge later. It is also important to reveal to what extent the vulnerabilities estimated by the PDM 3 conducted before the earthquakes have changed.

The findings from the PDM 4 study demonstrate significant improvements across multiple aspects, including household incomes, expenditures, coping strategies, and food security, as compared to the results of PDM 3. Several reasons can help explain these positive changes:

- Economic Support and Assistance: The aid provided in response to the earthquake played a crucial role in enhancing economic conditions for the C-ESSN beneficiaries. This support likely contributed to the observed increases in total incomes, expenditures, and debt ratios among households. By alleviating financial burdens, the assistance helped narrow the economic disparity between provinces affected by the disaster and those that remained unaffected.
- Enhanced Coping Mechanisms: The decrease in coping strategy scores (such as rCSI and LCSI) implies that households are relying less on extreme or adverse coping measures. This shift can be attributed to a combination of factors, including improved economic conditions, reduced financial stress due to earthquake aid, and enhanced access to essential services through programs like the C-ESSN.
- Alleviation of Food Insecurity: The increase in the proportion of households with acceptable Food Consumption Scores (FCS) and the consistent improvement in FCS scores over time signify progress in food security. This may be attributed to a combination of improved economic conditions, access to nutritional support, and aid aimed at mitigating the impact of the earthquake.
- Over time, households have learned to better manage their resources and adapt to challenging circumstances. This could lead to more effective coping strategies, improved financial decision-making, and better utilization of available support and resources.

Essentially, economic support, enhanced coping mechanisms, post-earthquake relief programs, and seasonal causes contributed to the observed improvements in household well-being, coping strategies and food security between PDM 3 and PDM 4. However, considering the economic volatility, whether this improvement is permanent will be supported by long-term monitoring activities.

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