



A funding shortage means potential reductions in food assistance to Syrian refugees and others in need in the coming months

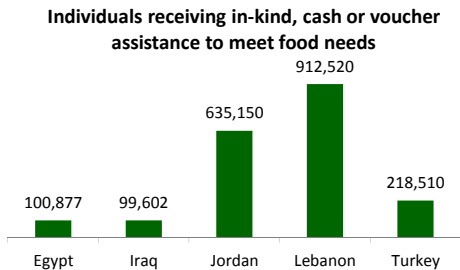
SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS:

Concerns over a possible food assistance funding pipeline break grew during September, with WFP starting a communications campaign across the region announcing the funding problems and warning of potential reductions in assistance in coming months. While no cut was necessary in September, communications and discussions were held with beneficiary communities to inform them of the situation.

Verifications and other measures continue across the region to ensure that food assistance is targeting those most in need. In Egypt, an anti-fraud verification process to be held in Greater Cairo is expected to provide a more accurate list of eligible beneficiaries who are physically present in the country and whose e-cards are remotely uploaded every cycle. In Lebanon, the Food Security sector is finalizing its 2015-16 3RP strategy, which will be based on the sustainability of current targeting and the incorporation of more resilience and stabilization interventions.

Overall, food assistance reached some 220,000 beneficiaries in camps in Turkey, with direct transfers to e-Food cards amounting to around USD 6 million. In Lebanon, more than 912,500 people received food assistance during the month, with almost USD 27 million injected in to the economy by the E-card and other partner interventions. Almost 100,000 refugees in camps in Iraq are receiving in-kind, cash or voucher assistance, with the voucher programme in Domiz camp injecting some USD 2 million into the economy. The construction of voucher retail shops inside Domiz and Darashakran camps in Iraq began this month, with voucher operations scheduled to begin in those camps in November. In Egypt, almost 101,000 individuals are receiving voucher assistance each month under a programme which has now injected more than USD 36 million into the local economy during the year. In Jordan, more than 635,000 people are receiving assistance from the sector.

In Lebanon, a country-wide food security and livelihood assessment was conducted, mainly focused on host communities but also including some refugees residing in those communities.



Joelle Eid, WFP

SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE REGION:

3,168,659	Refugee Population, end-September 2014
3,590,000	Refugee Population Planning figure, end-2014

NEEDS ANALYSIS:

The supply of agriculture and food products and production capacity is under strain due to the Syria crisis. Up to 25% of domestic food supply in the region is sourced from rural, mostly poor populations, often in areas hosting large numbers of refugees. There are increased reports of trans-boundary animal and plant diseases and pests in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. RRP partners across the region are concerned about early indications of water shortages which may impact domestic food production, livestock availability and, consequently, livelihoods. Water shortages could further increase retail prices for food products and reduce informal labour opportunities. The gap between wages earned and household expenditure is forcing families to take out loans and engage in other negative coping strategies.

The estimated number of people who will be in need of food assistance by the end of 2014 is some 2.6 million. Pre-assistance baseline monitoring reports indicate that Syrian refugees arrive in neighbouring countries with very low levels of food consumption. In the second quarter of 2014, 20 per cent of newly arriving Syrian refugees in Lebanon had poor food consumption scores, and 31 per cent had borderline food consumption scores. In Jordan, the WFP/REACH Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise (CFSME), released in July, found that 74% of Syrian refugees relied on WFP food vouchers as their primary source of income, while an estimated 85 percent of refugees in Jordan would not have economic access to sufficient food without WFP vouchers, with the vulnerability increasing with the length of time spent in Jordan. This evidence supports the necessity of not only maintaining food assistance in the region but also for food assistance to continue to be a strategic priority and for an examination into alternative, more sustainable, means for meeting basic food needs.

