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# Food Security Outcome Monitoring

WFP Lebanon | February 2019

## Highlights

- WFP assisted 646,684 displaced Syrians in February 2019. 23 percent of households were female-headed, 21 percent had children under the age of five, 13 percent had a disabled member and 37 percent of households had a member with a medical condition.
- The livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI) for food e-card and cash for food e-card slightly increased compared to November 2018. However, multipurpose cash for essential needs (MPC) households resorted to using fewer coping strategies such as spending more savings, purchasing food on credit and borrowing money.
- The average amount of accumulated debts increased for all modalities.
- The percentage of assisted households with acceptable food consumption (FCS) increased for cash for food and MPC families. On the other hand, the percentage of households with acceptable food consumption scores slightly decreased for the food e-card beneficiaries.
- The reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) showed a reduction among MPC households (from 11.3 in November 2018 to 9.6 in February 2019).
- Overall satisfaction stayed stable at around 8.2/10. Those receiving MPC and food e-card noted a higher satisfaction compared to November 2018.
- The percentage of non-assisted households with acceptable food consumption remained stable compared to November 2018 at 61 percent.

## Introduction

Since 2016, WFP's quarterly Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) report has measured the outcomes of WFP's assistance targeting Syrian refugees by monitoring status of both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households. The FSOM<sup>1</sup> covers outcomes for activity 1 (unconditional resource transfers to support access to food) in the Country Strategic Plan (CSP).




<sup>1</sup>Follow this link to download previous FSOM reports  
[http://vam.wfp.org/CountryPage\\_assessments.aspx?iso3=LBN](http://vam.wfp.org/CountryPage_assessments.aspx?iso3=LBN)

Since November 2017, monitoring is conducted on four different households groups:

- **Food e-card:** households receive USD 27 per family member. That can be redeemed on food at any of the 450 WFP-contracted shops across Lebanon.
- **Cash for food e-card:** households receive USD 27 per family member. They have the choice to redeem it either at a WFP-contracted shop or to withdraw it as cash from any automated teller machine (ATM).
- **Multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card:** households receive USD 27 per family member for their food needs and USD 175 per household for their essential needs, that can only be withdrawn from any ATM.
- **Non-assisted households:** registered Syrian refugees not receiving WFP assistance.

Households receiving multipurpose cash are validated and registered with UNHCR. They were selected based on a bottom-up approach with a list of those living below the survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB<sup>2</sup>). WFP targets households ranked below the SMEB threshold but also takes into account factors such as those living in security red zones, those receiving cash assistance from other agencies and non-profit organisations, and who do not live in proximity to ATMs. In November 2018, UNHCR and WFP re-estimated the vulnerability ranking of Syrian refugees. Around 35,373 cases stopped receiving assistance, while 35,250 cases started receiving assistance. There was also a reshuffling of cases within the groups where households shifted modalities based on their scoring. In February 2019, non-assisted cases started receiving WFP assistance due to the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and other cases shifted between modalities (table 1).

Table 1: Figures per modality, February 2019

	Food e-card	Cash for food e-card	MPC e-card	Total
	58,177	32,067	22,906	113,150
	288,560	218,528	139,596	646,684
	7,791,120	5,900,256	7,743,283	21,434,659

## Methodology

A random sampling approach was used to select a representative sample of the four different modalities referenced above. This report covers an analysis of data collected from a sample of 1,000 households in February 2019:

<sup>2</sup>Detailed explanation of the SMEB in the next section.

- 250 non-assisted households,
- 250 food e-card households,
- 250 cash for food e-card households,
- 250 multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card households.

The assisted sample was selected from households that continued to receive the same modality throughout 2018 in order to ensure comparability with previous cycles. The non-assisted households was selected from previously assisted and visited households in April and July 2018 and are no longer receiving assistance in February 2019.

FSOM surveys are coupled with qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) to triangulate quantitative findings.

A total of 30 FGDs were conducted in March 2019 with assisted households; food e-card, cash for food, and MPC households. The objective was to better understand the impact of modality type on the beneficiaries, WFP's communication strategies, as well as protection related issues.

## Outcome Results for Assisted Displaced Syrians

WFP analyses basic needs and food security outcome indicators to monitor outcome results of WFP assistance. The below sections detail the main findings on the livelihood sources, livelihoods coping strategies (LCSI), debts, expenditures, food consumption scores (FCS), reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) and other cross-cutting results, such as decision making in the households and satisfaction levels. Results are reported per assistance modality and are only comparable over time.

## Demographics



### Household size

Over the past year, the average household size has been stable across the different modalities remaining at 6 for food e-card, 7.5 for the cash for food, and 7 under MPC. The average household size increased among the non-assisted group since April 2018 from 4.6 to 6 in February 2019.

### Gender



Of the assisted sample, 45 percent were male and 54 percent were female. Among the non-assisted sample, 50 percent were males and 49 percent were female.

### Age





	0-12 months	1-5 years	6-11 years	12-17 years	18-59 years	60+ years
 Assisted	3%	18%	23%	16%	36%	4%
 Non-Assisted	3%	12%	23%	14%	45%	3%

Table 2: Age category for assisted and non-assisted

## Profile of household head



27 percent of households are female-headed. Their average age is 39. One percent were headed by 19 or 20 year olds. 35 percent of the female headed households are with no formal education 73 percent of households are male-headed with an average age of 40. 18 percent of male-headed households have no formal education. Among non-assisted cases, 16 percent of females and 3 percent of males have no formal education.

## Disabled members in the household



13 percent of assisted households have at least one member with a disability, of which 5 percent are heading the household.

	Total households	Percentage Disabled individuals	Percentage of households with disability
<b>Food e-card</b>	250	0.11%	12%
<b>Cash for food e-card</b>	250	0.14%	16%
<b>MPC e-card</b>	250	0.12%	11%

Table 3: Disability per modality

## Type of housing



43 percent of assisted cases live in non-permanent<sup>3</sup> housing and 9 percent live in non-residential<sup>4</sup> housing. 14 percent of the non-assisted households live in a non-permanent housing and 16 percent live in a non-residential units.

## Households' essential needs



Livelihood coping strategies are the strategies used by household to access essential needs such as adequate shelter, food, health services, education, etc) in times of stress. They are classified into three categories according to their severity: stress<sup>5</sup>, crisis<sup>6</sup> and emergency<sup>7</sup> strategies.

In February 2019, food e-card and MPC assisted households adopted mostly stress coping strategies such as selling household assets, spend savings, borrowing food or money. The cash for food assisted households relied more on crisis coping strategies such as reducing non-food expenses and selling productive

<sup>3</sup> non-permanent, temporary housing such as tents and prefabs

<sup>4</sup> non-residential units, not requiring or providing facilities for people to live on the premises such as collective shelter, garage, construction site, etc...

<sup>5</sup> Stress strategies indicate a reduced ability to deal with future shocks as the result of a current reduction in resources or increase in debts.

<sup>6</sup> Crisis strategies are often associated with the direct reduction of future productivity.

<sup>7</sup> Emergency strategies also affect future productivity, but are more difficult

assets. (see Figure 1). Cash for food and food e-card resorted to emergency coping strategies mainly internal displacement due to the shortage of resources to meet essential needs.

## Coping strategies

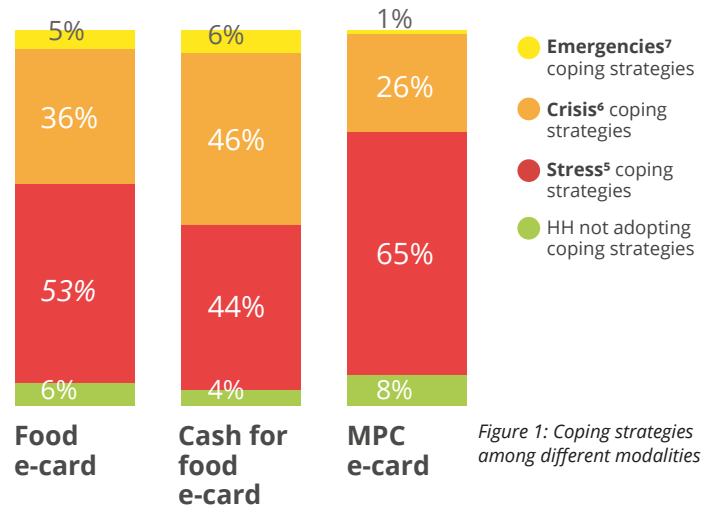


Figure 1: Coping strategies among different modalities

## Winter storm



In February, 40 percent of assisted households were affected by winter. They had additional expenses such as heating, repairing materials, and household items such as mattresses, blankets, and kitchen appliances. Of those affected, 5 percent did not have enough resources to cover the extra expenses and 4 percent received other in kind assistance other actors.

## Debts

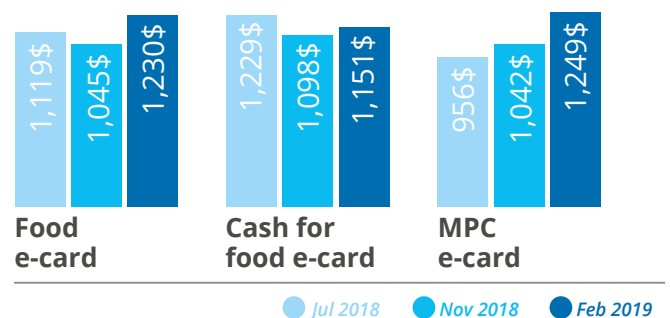


Syrian refugees in Lebanon are burdened by debts. The percentage of households with accumulated debts has been stagnant since January 2018 with an average of 93 percent across all modalities.

The average amount of accumulated debts increased for all three groups compared to November 2018 (see figure 2). Debts are related to food, rent and health related expenses. Shops and house owners are asking beneficiaries to repay the debts more since they are receiving assistance.

In addition to that, 67 percent of the households continue to acquire new debts in the last 30 days.

Figure 2: Average household DEBT in USD among different modalities.



While all assisted households are in debt for the same needs (food, rent and health), the modality of assistance leads to different ranking in value of the debts. Food debts decreased for all modalities in February, specifically MPC by 14 percent (46 percent in November 2018 to 32 percent in February 2019).

## Economic capacity to meet essential needs



This indicator measures the percentage of households with total monthly expenditure above the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) threshold. This means whether the household is able to meet its essential needs including food needs. Households with expenditure below the MEB are likely unable to access all the essential needs they need to live a dignified life, in absence of external support.

The value of the MEB calculated for Syrian refugees in Lebanon is USD 114 per person per month to cover the cost of survival needs. The average expenditure per capita is USD 105 for food e-card, USD 100 for cash for food, and USD 106 for MPC.

Results below show percentage of households above MEB who are able to meet their essential needs.

(Above MEB)	FEB 2019
Food e-card	36%
Cash for food e-card	27%
MPC e-card	41%

Table 4: Percentage of households above the MEB in February 2019 (per capita expenditures).

## Survival minimum expenditures

The SMEB is an indicator on the cost of food and non-food items needed by a refugee household of five members over a period of one month. It assumes a

## Food Consumption Groups

● Poor ● Borderline ● Acceptable

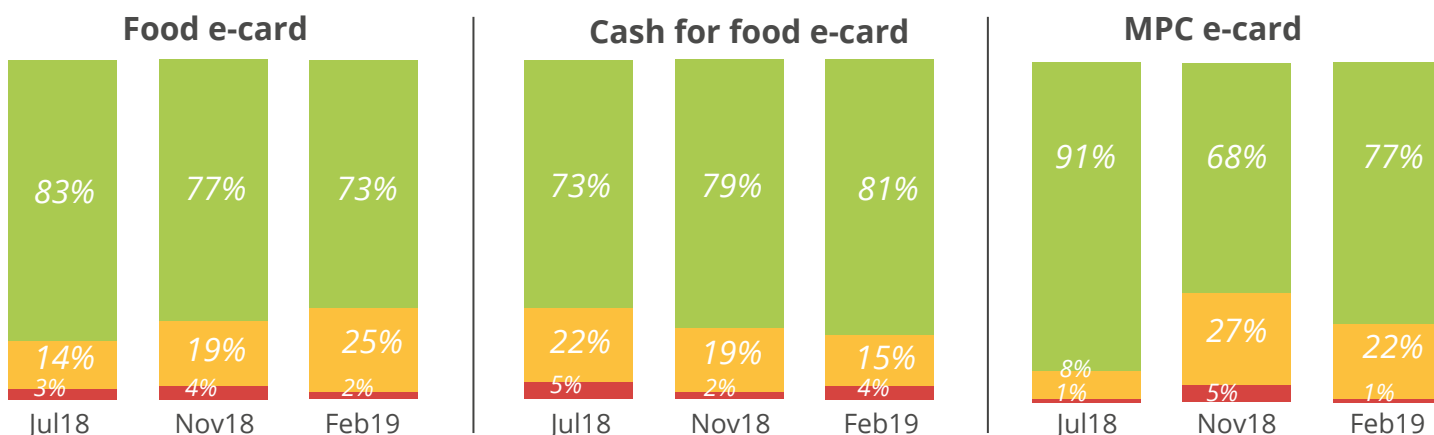


Figure 3: Food Consumption Groups among different modalities.

minimum calorific intake of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) of 2,100 Kcal but with fewer nutrients, the same non-food items, rent expenses for an informal tented settlement, less consumption of water, and an element of debts repayment. The SMEB also does not include the cost of health and education. The value of the SMEB calculated for Syrian refugees in Lebanon is USD 87 per person per month to cover the cost of survival needs. Households with expenditures below the SMEB are targeted by WFP to receive assistance through the three different modalities. Results per capita expenditures compared to November show that the percentage of households above SMEB increased showing that the households are more likely to meet their essential needs.

(Above SMEB)	NOV 2018	FEB 2019
Food e-card	41%	44%
Cash for food e-card	31%	42%
MPC e-card	39%	51%

Table 5: Percentage of households above the SMEB in November 2018 and February 2019 (per capita expenditures).

## Food consumption score



The percentage of assisted households with acceptable food consumption slightly decreased in February for food e-card beneficiaries however increased for cash for food and MPC beneficiaries compared to November results. Beneficiaries are consuming more cereals, pulses, and milk.

23% of the cash for food beneficiaries and 17% of the MPC households shop at WFP contracted shops. Households receiving food e-card assistance with acceptable food consumption decreased by 4 points (from 77 percent in November to 73 percent in February).

Consequently, the percentage of assisted households with poor food consumption increased to 2 percent for the cash for food households, as for the multipurpose cash and food e-card households it decreased to reach 1 percent for MPC and 2 percent for food e-card.

## Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

The rCSI is a relative score to measure the frequency and severity of food-related negative coping mechanisms adopted by households to cover their needs; an increase in score suggests a deterioration. Results indicate a decrease on the rCSI across all modalities meaning that households adopted fewer coping strategies to cover food and other basic needs. MPC households showed a drastic decrease in the use of coping strategies and reached 9.6 in February as compared to November (11.3). Both groups, food e-card and cash for food assisted households presented an increase respectively from 8.5 and 6.8 in November to 10.5 and 11.2 in February.

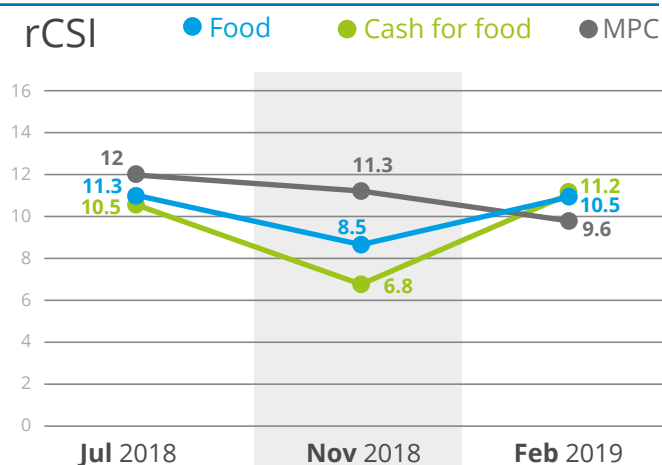


Figure 4: Reduced coping strategy index trends among different modalities.

## Cross-cutting indicators

### Satisfaction

Beneficiaries provided feedback rating their satisfaction with WFP assistance on a scale of 1-10. Overall satisfaction stayed almost the same and is stable at around 8.2.

During one FGD in Khalde with cash for food beneficiaries, a women stated, "as a widow, the assistance is making a big difference in my life," as she is able to ensure basic needs for her family.

### Accountability and protection

All assisted households reported receiving assistance without facing any safety challenges and were able to access WFP programmes and assistance during the last two months.

70 percent of the assisted household reported that the WFP programme are dignified. This means that they feel respected and empowered by WFP and implementing partner personnel; the programme sites are in good conditions and provide proper facilities; and there is no long waiting time during distribution or while redeeming their assistance.

### Decision-making

Households were asked about the person in charge of taking decisions regarding the use of assistance received. The majority of the households agreed that men and women decide together on how the assistance should be spent.

### Food e-card

	Jul 2018	Nov 2018	Feb 2019
Man	7%	13%	13%
Woman	40%	42%	39%
Both	53%	45%	48%

### Cash for food e-card

	Jul 2018	Nov 2018	Feb 2019
Man	17%	18%	13%
Woman	31%	26%	43%
Both	52%	56%	44%

### MPC e-card

	Jul 2018	Nov 2018	Feb 2019
Man	14%	23%	21%
Woman	25%	22%	28%
Both	61%	55%	51%

Figure 5: Decision-making on use of assistance among different modalities.

## Communication

WFP regularly communicates with beneficiaries and explains food and basic needs programming at distributions, validations or by SMS and through the hotline. Monthly text messages are sent to explain when and with how much e-cards are loaded. In February 2019, 95 percent of food e-card households, 95 percent of cash for food households and 98 percent of multipurpose cash households were aware of their assistance type.

On average, 22 percent of the beneficiaries are aware of how households are selected for WFP assistance. Around

81 percent of all households know how to contact WFP through the hotline. WFP programme is actively working on increasing capacity and having clear guidance on accountability to affected population. However, targeting criteria remains unclear to beneficiaries due to its complexity.

During the FGDs, beneficiaries who are using WFP “Dalili” application stated that the application is helping them locate the closest WFP contracted shops and compare food item prices across those shops.

## Outcome Results For Non-Assisted Displayed Syrians

The main source of income for the non-assisted Syrians is credit or borrowing (46 percent) followed by unskilled labour (33 percent).

In February, 94 percent of non-assisted households reported having accumulated debts (2 percent higher compared to November). Debts are still increasing as compared to previous months and reached USD 1,525 in February. Non-assisted Syrian households have accumulated their debts mainly on food (45 percent) followed by rent (34 percent).

The percentage of households with acceptable food consumption increased compared to November.

### Food Consumption Groups

Non-assisted Syrians

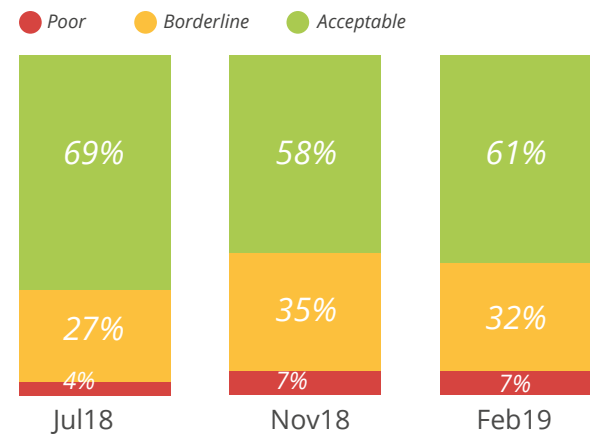


Figure 6: Food consumption groups of non-assisted Syrians.

## Upcoming!

**Longitudinal Impact study** on multipurpose cash and food-e-voucher beneficiaries in Lebanon 2018-2019.

In August 2018, UNHCR, WFP, and other basic assistance actors targeted their programmes according to the new rankings. The new scoring/ranking have shifted beneficiaries from one modality type to another. These changes included inclusion of around 35,000 cases into the three assistance modalities (those households who have not received any assistance from WFP in 2017/2018) and discontinuation of around 35,000 cases. The update of the targeting resulted in 2,969 new cases eligible to receive MPC and 20,433 new cases eligible to receive food e-card. WFP will monitor the impact of MPC and food e-card on newly included beneficiaries using the

**longitudinal impact study using quasi-experimental design** to understand the impact of different WFP assistance on Syrian refugees beneficiaries.

**The objective of the study is to:**

- To measure the impact of multipurpose cash assistance over a period of one year ;
- To measure the impact of food e-card assistance over a period of one year;
- To identify and highlight changes in household's socioeconomic situation due to MPC and food-e-card assistance;
- To assess on a continuous basis the food security status of the MPC and food beneficiaries;

