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Food Security Outcome Monitoring

WFP Lebanon | November 2018

Highlights

- WFP assisted 620,255 displaced Syrians in November 2018. 23 percent of households were female-headed, 75 percent had children under the age of five, 7 percent had a disabled member and 35 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 showed stability compared to July. However, multipurpose cash for essential needs (MPC) households resorted to using more coping strategies such as spending more savings, purchasing food on credit and borrowing money.
- The average amount of accumulated debts decreased for all modalities except for MPC households who relied more on credit to meet their essential needs - specifically food and rent.
- The percentage of assisted households with acceptable food consumption (FCS) decreased for food e-card and MPC families.
- On the other hand, the percentage of households with acceptable food consumption scores increased for the cash for food beneficiaries and reached 79 percent.
- The reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) showed a drastic reduction among cash for food households (from 10.5 in July to 6.8 in November) and food e-card households (from 11.3 in July to 8.5 in November).
- Overall satisfaction stayed stable at around 8/10. Those receiving MPC and cash for food noted a higher satisfaction compared to July (8.71 and 8.42 respectively).

- The percentage of non-assisted households with acceptable food consumption decreased.

Introduction

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. In Lebanon, it provides life-saving food and basic needs assistance to vulnerable UNHCR-registered displaced Syrians through an electronic card system. In October 2017, two new cash modalities were introduced in addition to the food ecard, the cash for food e-card and the multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card.

WFP continues to incorporate resilience into its interventions to ensure sustainability and strengthen its programme portfolio. As such, WFP shifted from the regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Plan (PRRO) 200987 to the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in January 2018. This CSP introduces capacity-strengthening support to enhance Lebanon's ability to manage the Syrian crisis and future shocks.

Since 2016, WFP's Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) measured the outcomes of WFP's assistance targeting Syrian refugees by monitoring status of both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households on a quarterly basis. The FSOM covers outcomes for activity 1 (Unconditional resources transfers to support access to food (CBT)) in the CSP.

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 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 (SMEB¹). 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 organizations, and who do not live in proximity to ATMs.

In November, a formula re-estimation was implemented. 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 were shifted modality based on their formula scoring.

Table 1: Figures per modality, November 2018.

	Food e-card	Cash for food e-card	MPC e-card	Total
	54,031	29,491	22,893	106,415
	272,896	208,213	139,146	620,255
	7,368,381	5,612,859	7,583,374	20,573,614

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 November 2018:

- 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.

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.



Livelihoods and essential needs

The majority of Syrian refugees have to prioritise their limited income across a number of essential needs to survive, often at the expense of their wellbeing. Results show that across all assistance modalities, households continued to rely primarily on WFP assistance as their main source of income followed by unskilled labour. MPC households are relying on credits as their second source of income. Alongside that assistance, households also employ a range of coping strategies to address their needs.

The livelihoods coping strategy index measures the strategies used by households to access food and cover their basic needs in times of stress. In November, the LCSI for food e-card and cash for food e-card showed stability, while it increased for MPC beneficiaries. Households resorted to spending more savings as well as purchasing food on credit and borrowing money. This might be associated with the winter season and the need to use coping strategies to cover essential needs such as fuel, gas, winter clothes and more food.



Livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI)

	APR 2018	JUL 2018	NOV 2018
Food e-card	4.9	5.5	5.3
Cash for food e-card	5.2	5.0	5.1
MPC e-card	4.7	3.9	5.1

Table 2: LCSI among different modalities.

¹Detailed explanation of the SMEB in the next section.

Debt

All Syrian refugees in Lebanon are burdened by debts. Almost all of those surveyed have accumulated debts over time (93 percent of food e-card households, 90 percent of cash for food households and 96 percent of MPC households). The average amount of accumulated debts have decreased for cash for food and food e-card (see figure 1). MPC beneficiaries on the other hand relied on more credit to meet their essential needs and recorded continuing to accumulate new debts in the last 30 days. Cash for food and food e-card holders also accumulated new debts in the last 30 days (66 percent and 74 percent respectively), but the amount in USD dropped (Table 3).

When households were asked to categorise what they are in debt for, results indicate that the debt categories reported by households are similar to the main expenditures of the households: food, rent and health related expenses.

While all assisted households are in debt for the same needs (food, rent and health), modality of assistance leads to different ranking in value of the debts. The food debts increased for all modalities in November, specifically MPC households increased their shares of debts on food by 16 percent (30 percent in July to 46 percent in November).

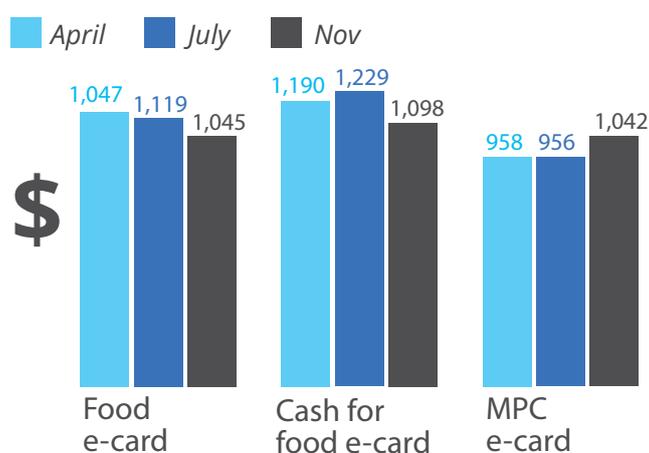


Figure 1: Average household debt in USD among different households.

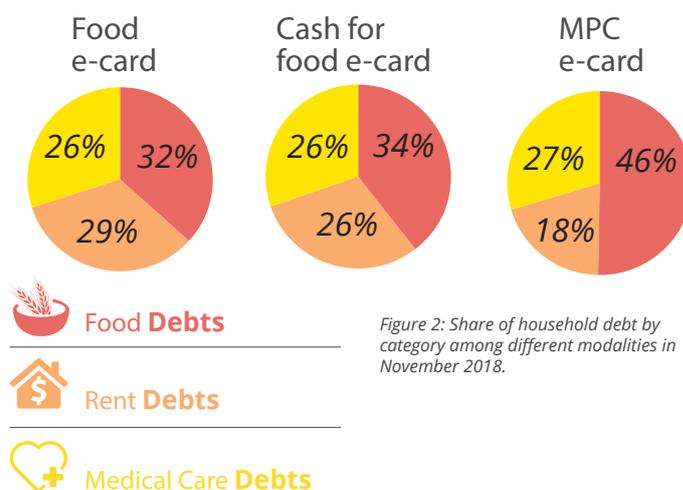


Figure 2: Share of household debt by category among different modalities in November 2018.

	Food e-card	Cash for food e-card	MPC e-card
July	254\$	245\$	205\$
Nov	211\$	220\$	248\$

Table 3: Amount of newly acquired debts in the last 30 days.

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 minimum caloric 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 debt 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 in November 2018 show that the percentage of households above SMEB decreased compared to July showing that households are less likely to meet their essential needs. November was the month that households were excluded and included into assistance. This often leads to beneficiaries getting concerned about their assistance status and as such under reporting their expenditures which leads to increase in number of households falling below the SMEB.

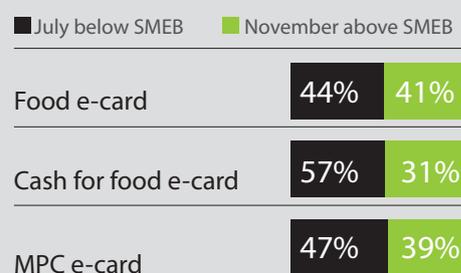


Figure 3: Percentage of households above the SMEB in July and November 2018 (per capita expenditures).

Expenditure

Food was the largest expenditure across all modalities. In November, households assisted with food e- card spent less of their total expenditures on food compared to July (USD 297 in July and USD 266 in November). The average total expenditures for November are: USD 588 for food e-card households, USD 659 for cash for food e-card households and USD 718 for MPC e-card households. There was an increase on the winter related expenditures such as fuel and gas.

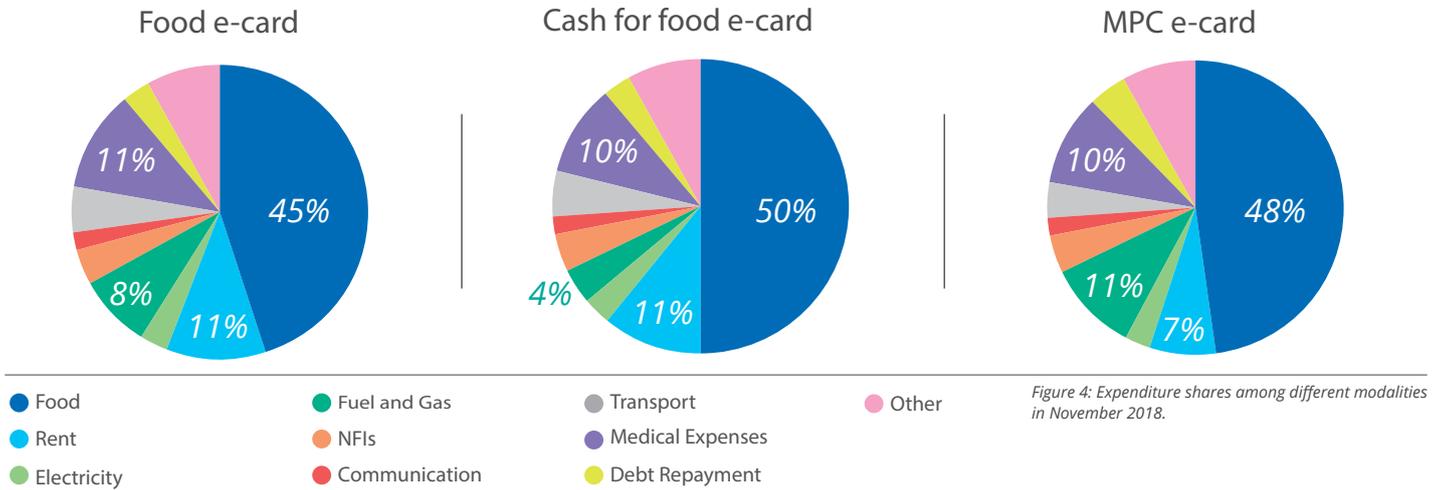


Figure 4: Expenditure shares among different modalities in November 2018.

Food consumption score

The percentage of assisted households with acceptable food consumption decreased in November for food e-card beneficiaries as well as MPC beneficiaries compared to July.

Households receiving MPC with acceptable food consumption decreased by 23 points (from 91 percent in July to 68 percent in November). Female-headed households recorded a lower acceptable food consumption score compared to male-headed households.

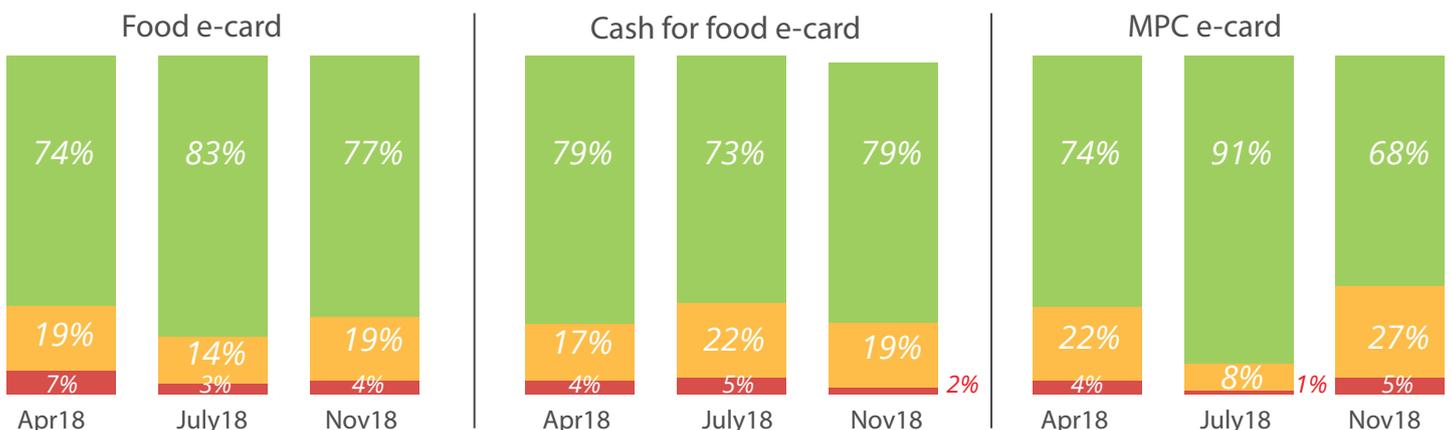
Consequently, the percentage of assisted households with poor food consumption increased to 5 percent for the MPC e-card households and to 4 percent for the food e-card households, as for the cash for food e-card households it decreased to reach 2 percent.

In November, atypical fluctuations in reporting of food consumption occurred due to households under reporting their outcomes in fear of being excluded.

Food consumption groups

■ Poor ■ Borderline ■ Acceptable

Figure 5: Food consumption groups among different modalities.



Reduced coping strategy index

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.

Cash for food households showed a drastic decrease in the use of coping strategies and reached 6.8 in November as compared to July (10.5). This decrease also showed with the food e-card beneficiaries (from 11.3 in July to 8.5 in November).

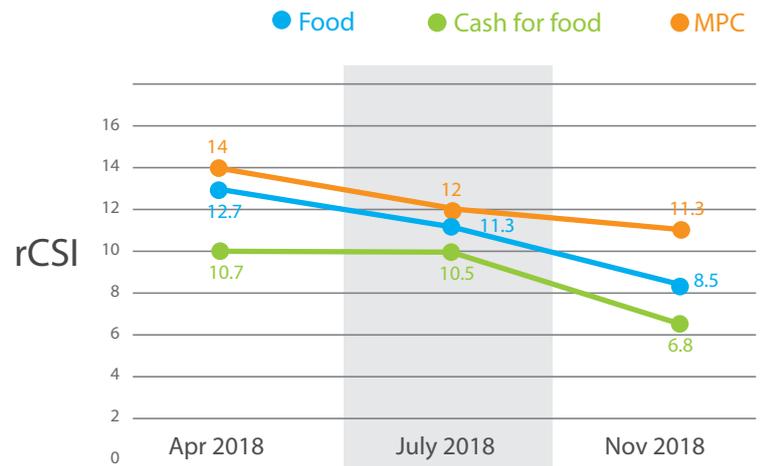


Figure 6: Reduced coping strategy index trends among different modalities.

Cross-cutting theme & 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 around 8.0. Those receiving multipurpose cash assistance and cash for food assistance noted a higher satisfaction compared to July (MPC 8.71, cash for food 8.42).

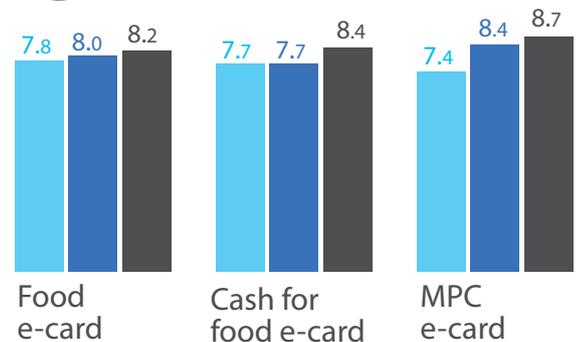


Figure 7: Beneficiary satisfaction among different modalities.

Apr18 July18 Nov18

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

	Apr 2018	July 2018	Nov 2018
	16%	7%	13%
	45%	40%	42%
	39%	53%	45%

Cash for food e-card²

	Apr 2018	July 2018	Nov 2018
	18%	17%	18%
	32%	31%	26%
	48%	52%	56%

MPC e-card

	Apr 2018	July 2018	Nov 2018
	24%	14%	23%
	24%	25%	22%
	52%	61%	55%

Table 4: 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 November, 97 percent of food e-card households, 98 percent of cash for food households and 95 percent of multipurpose cash households were aware of their assistance type.

On average, 27 percent of the beneficiaries are aware of how households are selected for WFP assistance. Around 86 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.

Outcome results for non-assisted Syrian refugees

The main source of income for the non-assisted Syrians is unskilled labour (52 percent) followed by credit or borrowing (48 percent).

In November, 92 percent of non-assisted households reported having accumulated debts (same percentage compared to July). Debts are still increasing as compared to previous months and reached USD 1,445 in November. Non-assisted Syrian households have accumulated their debts mainly on food (49 percent) followed by rent (22 percent).

The percentage of households with acceptable food consumption decreased compared to July.

Food consumption groups

Non-assisted Syrians

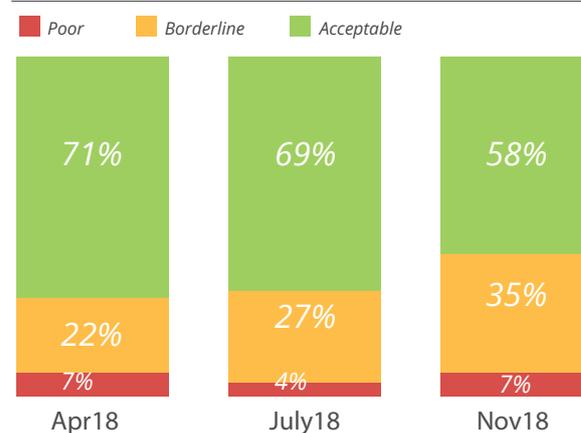


Figure 8: Food consumption groups of non-assisted Syrians.

²Some percentages do not add up to a 100 percent due to some households not responding to the decision making question.