Emergency Social Safety Net

Post Distribution Monitoring Summary
Round 7 (Cross-Section 3)

WFP World Food Programme

Highlights

- ESSN beneficiary households displayed a deterioration in all indicators with respect to November 2018. Debt levels and food consumption are now worse than the Pre-Assistance Baseline levels recorded in May 2017.

- The cash assistance continues to play an essential role in supporting beneficiaries to meet their needs, and preventing an otherwise worse situation.

- The deterioration in indicators is likely driven by persistent high rates of inflation. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, in March 2019 annual inflation was 19.71% and annual inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages was 29.77%.

Introduction

The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) program was launched across Turkey in November 2016. It provides unrestricted, unconditional cash assistance to people living under different forms of protection in Turkey. For brevity, in this report they will be referred to as refugees. The ESSN cash assistance aims to allow beneficiaries to meet their basic needs. By March 2019, the ESSN was providing monthly assistance to **1.58 million people**.

This brief summary analyses the effects of the ESSN assistance on beneficiary households using data from refugees living off-camp before and after receiving ESSN cash assistance. This analysis provides a snapshot of the results from four surveys: Pre-Assistance Baseline (PAB) and Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) rounds three, five and seven (all cross-sectional data). A true measure of the impact of the ESSN requires a process of matching beneficiary households with similar non-beneficiary households; this work is underway in collaboration with the World Bank.

Methodology and Data

The PAB and PDM samples include both eligible and ineligible applicant households, with the ineligible households serving as a comparison group. WFP relies on phone-based data collection to allow for a large sample size with high confidence intervals, while remaining cost efficient. This method allows for wide geographic coverage over a shorter time but is limited to shorter questionnaires due to higher non-response rates to phone interviews. All data was collected by the Gaziantep-based call centre managed by TRC.

The PAB data was collected between February and May 2017; a total of 8,690 surveys were completed. This PAB data serves as a point of reference for the PDM data analysed for this report. The table below outlines the subsequent PDM rounds of data collection. Throughout this report, the last month of data collection is used to describe the PDM round for ease of

reference. For instance, March-19 results refer to PDM7 survey outcomes. The surveys are cross-sectional; each PDM round presented here includes a snapshot of applicants who were sampled at the time of data collection. The PDM7 data is representative of all applicants until December 2018, a total of 443,125 households covering **2.2 million people**, while the data itself was collected from January to March 2019. As with the PAB design, the country is stratified into five regions; Istanbul, Aegean, Anatolia/Thrace, Mediterranean, and South-East.
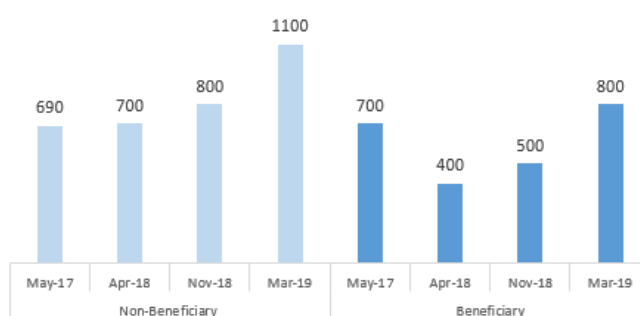
Results

The PDM surveys inquire about **the total accumulated debt incurred by households**. Results show that for beneficiaries, there was a substantial decrease in debt from May-17 to April-18. However, median debt has increased throughout 2018 and into 2019, with **current beneficiary debt (800 TL) exceeding the baseline figure (700 TL).** Non-beneficiary debt also now exceeds the baseline figure.

When comparing to baseline, the data shows that total accumulated debt has increased by 59.42% for non-beneficiaries, whereas the increase registered during the same period for beneficiaries was less, at 14.29%. This indicates that **the cash assistance may have prevented further deterioration**.

However, when comparing only the two most recent periods of data collection (March-19 versus November-18), the median debt of beneficiaries increased more than that of non-beneficiaries (60% and 37.5 % respectively). This may indicate that non-beneficiaries are approaching a ceiling in their available credit - future rounds of data collection will clarify this point.

Survey	Date	Sample	Data Collection
Baseline	February—May 2017	8,690	Cross-Section
PDM1*	August—November 2017	6,958	
PDM2*	November 2017—January 2018	6,543	(*panel data not taken into consideration in this report)
PDM3 (CS1)	February—April 2018	4,834	
PDM4*	April—August 2018	6,184	
PDM5 (CS2)	September—November 2018	4,862	
PDM6*	November—December-2018	4,970	
PDM7 (CS3)	January —March 2019	4,603	

Figure 1: Median Debt: PAB to PDM7 by Beneficiary status

Non-Beneficiary: May-17 690, Apr-18 700, Nov-18 800, Mar-19 1100
Beneficiary: May-17 700, Apr-18 400, Nov-18 500, Mar-19 800

Livelihoods coping strategies focus on behaviours of households which have longer term implications on their productive capacities and future ability to meet their needs. Some strategies, such as reducing health expenditures or sending school-aged children to work, are more severe than others and have longer-term ramifications on household resilience. PDM surveys ask the participants if, within the previous 30 days, they have resorted to using 13 different livelihoods coping strategies, which fall into stress, crisis and emergency categories based on severity.

The latest PDM data collection (March-19) shows that the use of most coping strategies increased for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, with respect to the previous round (November-18). **The use of coping strategies rose more sharply amongst beneficiaries.** Figures 2 and 3 show the details of seven selected livelihoods coping strategies.

Figures 2 and 3 show that the proportion of households reporting reducing education expenditure, the entire household moving, and withdrawing children from school rose for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, with larger increases among beneficiary households. When considering all 13 coping strategies collected, **beneficiaries increased use of more coping strategies than non-beneficiaries.** This highlights the higher levels of vulnerability among beneficiary households; at baseline, the average LCSI of beneficiaries was 26% higher than that of non-beneficiaries. The latest data shows that the beneficiaries may now be more affected by macroeconomic changes context, despite receiving regular cash assistance.

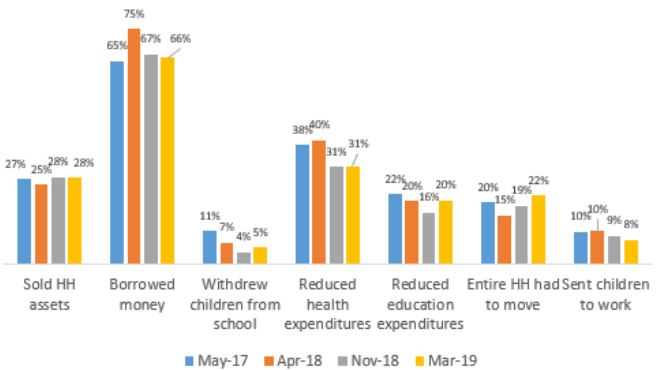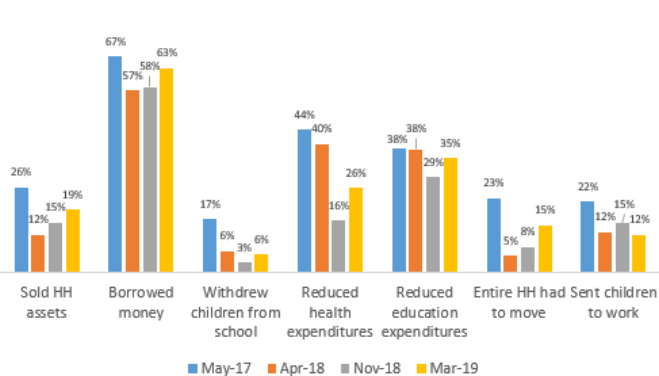Figure 2: Use of Livelihoods Coping Strategies for Non-beneficiaries: PAB to PDM7

Figure 3: Use of Livelihoods Coping Strategies for Beneficiaries: PAB to PDM7

Thirteen coping strategies (including all the coping strategies shown here, plus five additional) **are combined into a weighted sum known as the Livelihoods Coping Strategy Index (LCSI).** This composite indicator is constructed in each round of PDM surveys. When comparing the last two rounds of data collection (March-19 versus November-18), **the non-beneficiary LCSI increased by 7%, while for beneficiaries it increased by 25%.**

For both groups, while the LCSI has reversed many of its gains, it remains below the baseline level — however future PDMs may show different results.

Figure 4: Livelihoods Coping Strategies Index: PAB to PDM7 by beneficiary status
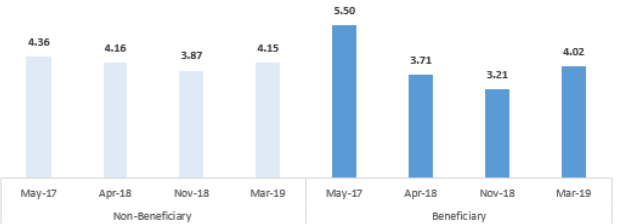
The reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) is a standard indicator used to measure household food security. When households do not have adequate food or the money to buy food, they resort to common consumption coping strategies such as reducing the amount of food consumed, reducing the number of meals, or restricting the food consumption of adults in order for children to eat more. A numeric score, the rCSI, is calculated based on the extent and the frequency at which the households employ these coping strategies.

From May-17 to November-18, both beneficiary and non-beneficiary rCSI declined significantly, with a larger decrease among beneficiaries. However, **from November-18 to March-19, the trend reversed and the rCSI of both groups increased**. During this period, the average rCSI of non-beneficiaries increased by 84%, and by 51% for beneficiaries. These increases are clearly higher than the LCSI increases, indicating that households first adjust their consumption behaviour. The average rCSI of non-beneficiaries is now higher than that of beneficiaries i.e. the beneficiaries are using fewer of these coping strategies than the non-beneficiaries. This in turn indicates that the cash assistance may have prevented further deterioration among beneficiaries. The averages of both groups remain below the baseline values, however future PDMs may show different results.

The rCSI increases aligns with a period of extremely high food inflation; according to the Turkish Statistical Institute, annual inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages reached 30.97% in January-19, and remained at 29.77% by March-19.

Figure 5: Mean Reduced Coping Strategies Index: PAB to PDM7, by beneficiary status
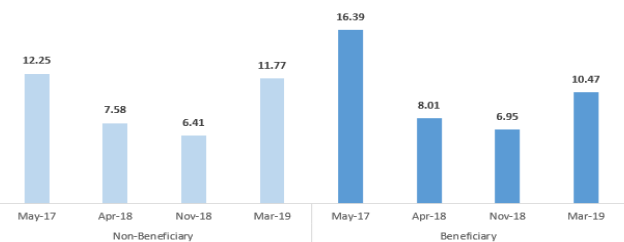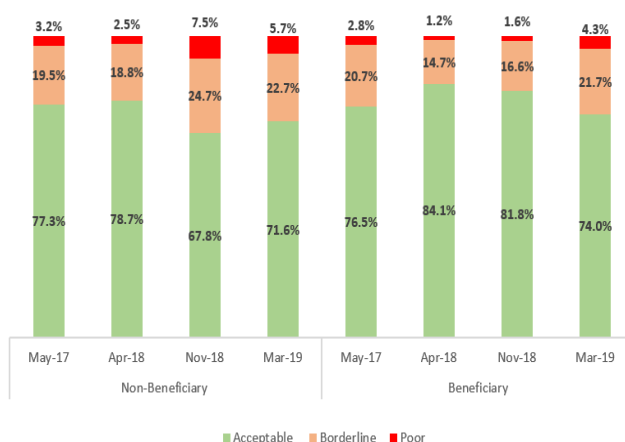
The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a standard WFP indicator used globally to measure food security. It is a measure of the diversity of the household diet and how frequently the main food groups are consumed. Through this indicator, household diets are classified into three groups: acceptable, borderline or poor. **Figure 6** presents the proportion of households with acceptable, borderline and poor food consumption.

The March-19 data shows that 74% of beneficiaries and 72% of non-beneficiaries have acceptable levels of food consumption. The non-beneficiaries' share of acceptable food consumption improved by 3.8 percentage points compared to November-18, however it is still below the pre-assistance level (as seen in May-17). It should be noted that despite small improvements in non-beneficiary FCS, the average rCSI increased. This indicates that despite consumption of diverse food groups, they were still forced to limited quantities or reduce the number of meals per day.

The proportion of ESSN beneficiaries with acceptable food consumption decreased by 7.8 percentage points between November 2018 and March 2019. Thus, **by PDM7, the FCS results are worse than the baseline results for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.**

Figure 6: Food Consumption Groups: PAB to PDM7 by beneficiary status

	Non-Beneficiary				Beneficiary			
	May-17	Apr-18	Nov-18	Mar-19	May-17	Apr-18	Nov-18	Mar-19
Poor	3.2%	2.5%	7.5%	5.7%	2.8%	1.2%	1.6%	4.3%
Borderline	19.5%	18.8%	24.7%	22.7%	20.7%	14.7%	16.6%	21.7%
Acceptable	77.3%	78.7%	67.8%	71.6%	76.5%	84.1%	81.8%	74.0%

■ Acceptable ■ Borderline ■ Poor

Conclusion

Overall, the majority of outcome indicators tracked by the ESSN programme have demonstrated a deterioration between November-18 and March-19. It is important to highlight that among ESSN beneficiaries, average debt and Food Consumption Score results are now worse than the May-17 baseline values. However, it is equally important to note that among all key indicators, despite higher beneficiary vulnerability at the baseline, non-beneficiary results are now worse than beneficiary results. This emphasises that **the cash assistance continues to play an essential role in supporting beneficiaries to meet their needs, and preventing an otherwise worse situation**.

Given the deterioration in outcomes for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, **it is likely that the driving factor is high rates of inflation**. As noted in the previous PDM report, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute annual inflation peaked at over 25% in October 2018. By March 2019, it remained in double digits at 19.71%. This **ongoing increase in prices is eroding the purchasing power provided by the cash transfers**, contributing to the deteriorating outcomes. In conjunction with the economic analysis, the ESSN programme will continue to monitor closely the changes in beneficiary outcomes to evaluate programme implications.

WFP/ Ozan Toptas