



LEBANESE REPUBLIC
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

**Food Security Report:
Electronic Food Vouchers Distributed to
Beneficiary Households**

September 2015 – December 2015

National Poverty Targeting Program

Central Management Unit



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Food consumption score	5
Dietary diversity score	7
Coping strategy index	8
Conclusion	10
Tables	
Table 1: Dietary Diversity Score by Cycle	7
Table 2: Coping Strategy Index by cycle and sex of household head	8
Figures	
Figure 1: Average Food Consumption Score by Cycle	5
Figure 2: Food Consumption Score categories by male and female headed households	6
Figure 3: Average Number of Days per Week of food Consumption by male and female headed households	7

Introduction

The National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP) implemented the 8th electronic food voucher (e-cards) distribution in December 2015 and was able to provide assistance for 5,076 poor Lebanese households (HH). These HHs constitute less than 5% of the total number of beneficiary HHs classified by the Central Management Unit of NPTP, at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, as the most vulnerable Lebanese HHs that applied to the program. Throughout 2015, limited resources led to the suspension of assistance in the months of March and April 2015.



During the reporting period (September-December 2015) the electronic food voucher was loaded with USD 30 per beneficiary, capped to six individuals per e-card which beneficiaries can use to buy their food of choice. Beneficiaries of the program were able to redeem their assistance at the 450 shops contracted by WFP across the country.

The Central Management Unit and the Ministry of Social Affairs have been monitoring the e-card service by conducting a Post Distribution Monitoring questionnaire (PDM) with a randomly selected sample on monthly basis. The results of

the monitoring are spelled out in this report Food Security Report which measures three food security indicators: Food Consumption Score, Dietary Diversity Score and Coping Strategy Index.

The reporting period covers two cycles of monitoring, the September-October cycle where a total of 384 PDM surveys were conducted and the November-December 2015 cycle where 311 PDM questionnaires were conducted.¹ This report compares the results of the two cycles with the baseline survey (PAB) which was conducted in November 2014 prior to the implementation of the e-card program.

Gender analysis on the information collected will be based on sex disaggregated data from both male and female Headed Households. For the baseline survey, only 15% of the HHs were headed by a female. The average HH size of female headed HHs was significantly lower than those headed by males. Average HH size for female headed HHs was 3.9 versus 5.9 for male headed HHs, meaning that female headed households include less members on average. More than 80% of male headed HHs were living in either an apartment or a separated house, compared to only 58% for female headed HHs who also live in apartments. The percentage of female headed HHs living in a separated room was 16% compared to 12% for male headed HHs.

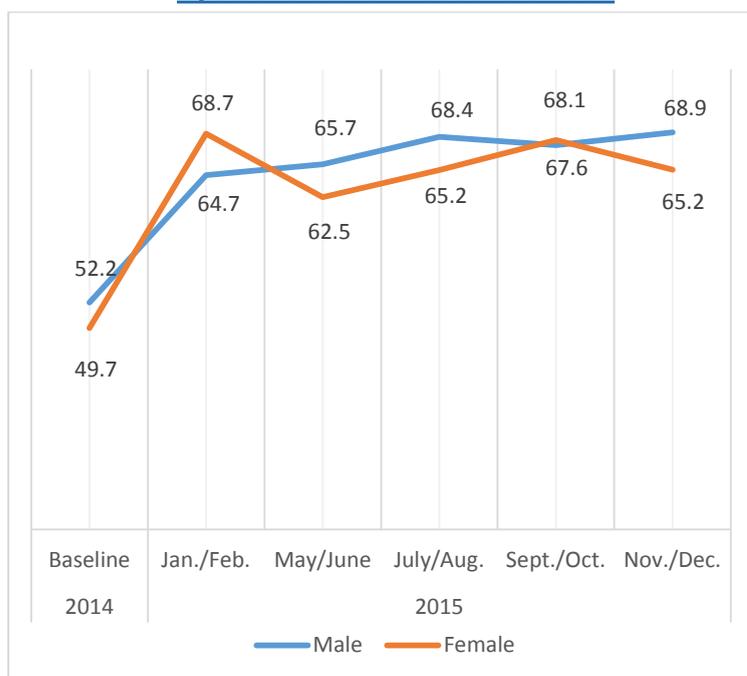
¹ Monitoring visits conducted for the November-December cycle were less than the sampled visits.

Food Consumption Score

The Average Food Consumption Score among beneficiaries receiving assistance increased from 52 points to reach 69 in December 2015; a 33% increase between the baseline and the latest cycle. This shows that the e-card beneficiary HHs are consuming around 1.3 times more food than they used to before receiving assistance. Analysis of the FCS across cycles proves the gradual improvement of food consumption followed by stabilization throughout 2015.

During the last two cycles of assistance (Sep-Oct and Nov-Dec) there is a stabilization of the FCS score and a highly significant decrease by 27 points in the low and borderline food security as compared to baseline. 91% of the assisted beneficiaries fell under the acceptable category in the Oct-Dec cycle.

Figure 1: Average Food Consumption Score by Cycle and Sex of household head



Further analysis by sex of household head was conducted. The sample analyzed is representative

of the population on the national level. Findings from the baseline and the consecutive rounds of monitoring show that the number of female headed households is much less than the male headed household.²

Analyzing the average FCS by male and female headed HH, both recorded a significant increase in FCS with 32% and 31% respectively in comparison with the baseline. Female headed HHs had a baseline FCS value of 49.7 which increased to 65.2 during Nov- Dec 2015 cycle, similarly for the male headed HHs, FCS increased from 52.2 to reach 68.9 during the same period (Figure 1).

Trend analysis of the FCS disaggregated by head of household sheds more light on the food security situation of each group. Female HH households recorded a lower average FCS at baseline as compared to male headed households. Following the provision of the first round of assistance, female headed HH recorded a significant improvement, even better than the male HH households by 5 points. However, during the cut in assistance (April-May) the female Headed HH FCS average score dipped down from 68.7 to 62.5 showing that the cut in assistance had a higher impact on the female Headed HH versus the male headed household.

The average FCS of female headed HH remains below that of the male headed throughout the monitoring period from May-Dec.

² Baseline data shows that 15% of the HH visited were female headed

Food Consumption Score

The food consumption score was also analyzed using three categories: poor, borderline and acceptable. The baseline figures showed that 11% of the HHs had a poor FCS, 25% borderline and 63% an acceptable FCS. These figures improved significantly from the baseline. In the last monitoring cycle of 2015 the percentage of HHs having a poor FCS was reduced to 2%, 7% for borderline and 91% acceptable FCS.

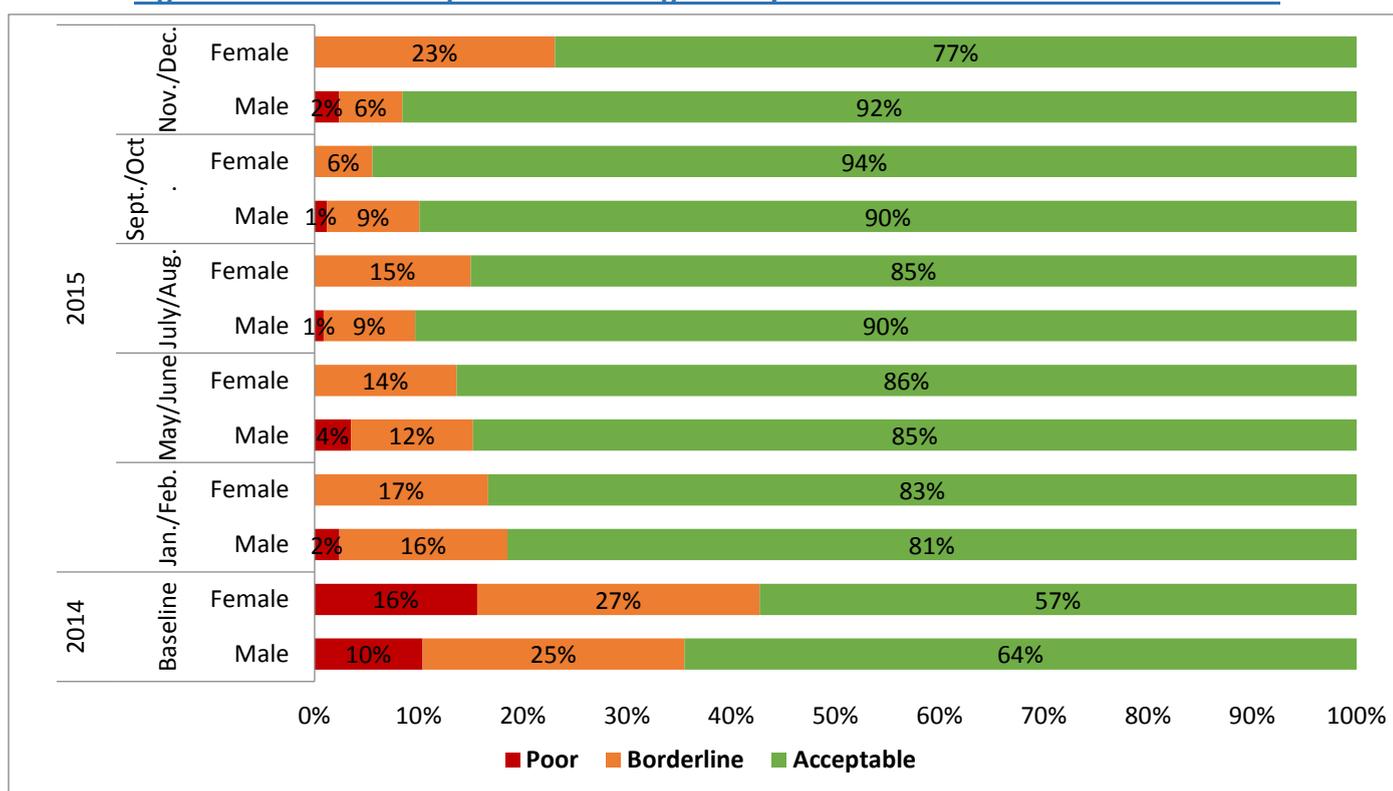
Acceptable food consumption recorded a significant increase of 28 points, from 63% to 91% as compared to the baseline. FCS by sex of household head provides interesting insight into the change in the food consumption of each group. At the baseline, 43% of female headed HH fell under the poor and borderline category. Following the provision of assistance for several consecutive cycles and as of December 2015, female headed households recorded a drastic

improvement to reach 23% of borderline FCS and 0% of poor FCS.

The improvement in food security is also evident in the male headed households where poor and borderline FCS improved from 35% at baseline to 8% during the last cycle (Nov-Dec). Only 6% of male headed HHs have a borderline food consumption score versus 23% to those headed by females, around 4 time more than male headed HHs. These differences might be due to the relatively small sample size for the Nov-Dec PDM cycle.

Provision of consecutive rounds of assistance shows that FCS levels improve faster with regular assistance. Results also show that the assistance has helped improve the food security of both female headed and male headed households, in some instances leading to better improvement in the female headed households.

Figure 2: Food Consumption Score categories by male and female headed households



Dietary Diversity

A dietary diversity score is an indicator of the diversity of food consumed. Overall, since the beginning of the assistance, analysis of the Average Dietary Diversity Score (ADDS) below shows an improvement from the baseline to Nov/Dec 2015 cycle 5.8 and 6.6 respectively, a total increase of 14%. This indicates that the beneficiaries were consuming more diversified food compared to the baseline.

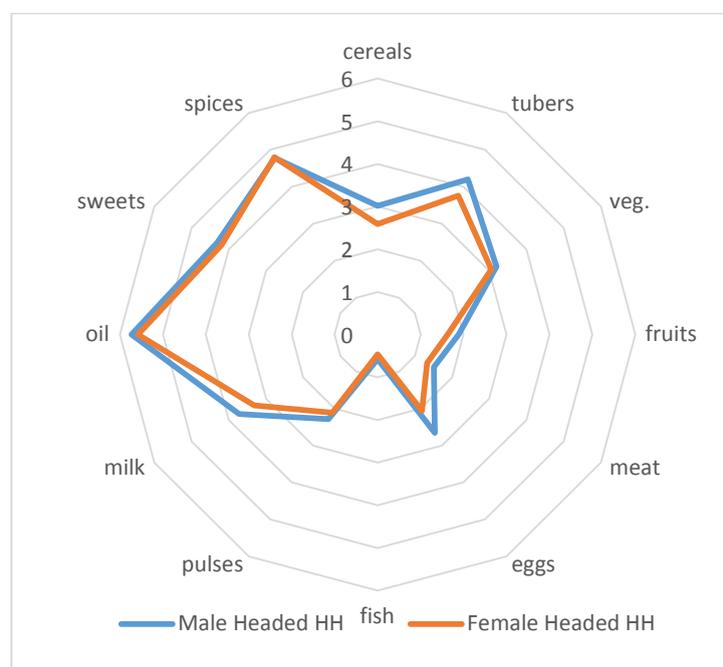
Table 1: Dietary Diversity Score by Cycle

Year	Cycle	Sex of HH Head	Average	St. Deviation	% change from Baseline
2014	Baseline	Male	5.9	1.3	+12% Male Headed HH
		Female	5.8	1.4	
2015	Jan./Feb.	Male	6.4	0.9	Male Headed HH
		Female	6.4	0.8	
	May/June	Male	6.3	0.9	+5% Female Headed HH
		Female	6.6	0.7	
	July/Aug.	Male	6.5	0.8	Female Headed HH
		Female	6.2	1.0	
	Sept./Oct.	Male	6.3	0.9	Female Headed HH
		Female	6.5	0.7	
	Nov./Dec.	Male	6.6	0.8	Female Headed HH
		Female	6.1	1.0	

The Average Dietary Diversity Score varied among male and female headed HHs where it increased by 12% and 5% respectively as compared to baseline. As for the last two cycles, female headed HHs recorded a slight decrease in average ADDS from 6.5 to 6.1, a decrease of 6%. On the contrary, male headed HHs had a slight increase in average ADDS, were it improved from 6.3 to 6.6, an increase of around 5%. This was also reflected in the DDS categories of low medium and high were 4% of

male headed HHs had a Low DDS compared to 8% for female headed HHs. The same difference was found for High DDS, but in favor for male headed HHs who had 71% versus 38% for female headed HHs. As mention earlier in the analysis, these differences might be due to the relatively small sample size of the Nov-De. 2015 cycle.

Figure 3: Average Number of Days per Week of food Consumption by male and female headed households



When comparing the number of days each food group was eaten (figure 3) for the monitored cycles, it is clear that female headed HH on average ate less amounts of food than male headed HHs which is the reason behind the lower FCS and ADDS. While the male and female Headed HH follow similar trends in food consumption, female headed households consume less eggs, fish, cereal and fruits. Further analysis on female headed HH is required to better understand the differences in food consumption.

Coping Strategies

Consumption Based Coping Strategies:

Coping strategy index

This index is an indicator of the coping mechanisms applied in order to deal with lack of food or money to buy food. The Coping Strategy Index recorded a consistent decrease to reach 8.5 in Nov-Dec 2015 as compared to 18.0 at the baseline. This indicates that beneficiaries fared better and are using 50% less coping strategies since the beginning of the program.

Results show that both female and male headed households are using less coping strategies to deal with the lack of food or money to buy which is a reflection of the positive impact of the food assistance on the beneficiaries.

Table 2: Coping Strategy Index by cycle and sex of household head

Year	Cycle	Sex of HH Head	Average	St. Deviation	% change from Baseline
2014	Baseline	Male	17.7	13.3	-53% Male headed HH
		Female	20.0	13.5	
2015	Jan./Feb.	Male	11.2	10.4	
		Female	10.4	9.1	
	May/June	Male	11.7	11.0	
		Female	14.7	13.2	
	July/Aug.	Male	9.6	10.3	
		Female	9.0	9.8	
	Sept./Oct.	Male	9.3	9.6	
		Female	9.1	9.2	
	Nov./Dec.	Male	8.4	9.4	
		Female	9.6	12.0	

Male and female headed HHs witnessed a major decrease of average CSI by 53% and 52% respectively between the baseline and the latest cycle (Nov-Dec). CSI for male headed HHs decreased from 17.7 to reach 8.4, while for female headed HHs decreased from 20.0 to 9.6 points. Average CSI of the last cycle for female headed HHs witnessed an increase compared to the previous one, from 9.1 to 9.6, an increase of 5.5%. This might be due to the small sample size of the Nov-Dec 2015 cycle.



Conclusion

The three food security indicators: food consumption score, dietary diversity score and the coping strategy index show that NPTP e-card beneficiary households are witnessing a major and significant improvement in their food security following the provision of assistance.

E-card beneficiaries are consuming more food that is more diversified and are relying less on coping strategies when facing food shortages compared to the baseline survey.

Results also show that the assistance has helped improve the food security of both female headed and male headed households, in some instances leading to a significant improvement in the female headed households when compared to baseline. Nevertheless, the results of the latest cycle show that male headed households remain ahead of the female headed households with better food security results.

The three food security indicators (Food Consumption Score, Dietary diversity Score and Coping Strategy Index) continued their improvement until the November-December 2015 cycle. Results show that the provision of consecutive rounds of assistance lead to a faster and more consistent improvement in food security.



LEBANESE REPUBLIC
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

National Poverty Targeting Program
Central Management Unit
April 2016