



Food Security Report:

Food security indicators among e-card assisted households participating in the National Poverty Targeting Programme

January-March 2016



LEBANESE REPUBLIC
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

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Introduction

The Emergency National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) continued its temporary e-card food voucher assistance from January until March 2016. The assistance was first introduced in November 2014. Through the programme, beneficiaries are able to spend US\$ 30 per person, capped at six per family, in WFP-contracted shops across Lebanon.

NPTP teams at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Social Affairs carefully monitor the e-card assistance through post-distribution monitoring (PDM) questionnaires each month. The data collected is then compared against data from previous cycles as well as against the November 2014 baseline survey

Exceptionally, for January – March 2016, the cycle was analysed as a three month period rather than two as in February, double the amount was uploaded; US\$ 60 per person rather than US\$ 30. **This** cycle was financed by UNHCR with a total amount of US\$ 2,450,207.

The main food security outcomes measured were food consumption scores, dietary diversity score and coping strategy indexes.

The report also **looked** at the total amounts uploaded to the e-cards and redeemed by beneficiaries. The outcome indicators confirm that beneficiaries had improved food security statuses during the monitored period.

For this first quarter of 2016, a total of 526 PDM questionnaires were conducted: 148 in January, 189 in February and 189 in March.

i. Food consumption score

Average food consumption score continued to improve compared against the baseline and the previous cycles.

The food consumption score increased from 52 to 70, a 34 percent increase from the baseline. Over the last nine months, the average food consumption score has ranged between 68 and 70. This shows that the e-card beneficiary households have, to a certain extent, stabilised their food consumption habits whilst using the e-card.

There were no significant differences found between the food consumption scores of male and female headed households (p -value > 0.05). The average food consumption score was valued at 69.9 and 69.2 for male and female headed households respectively.

Table 1: Average food consumption score by cycle

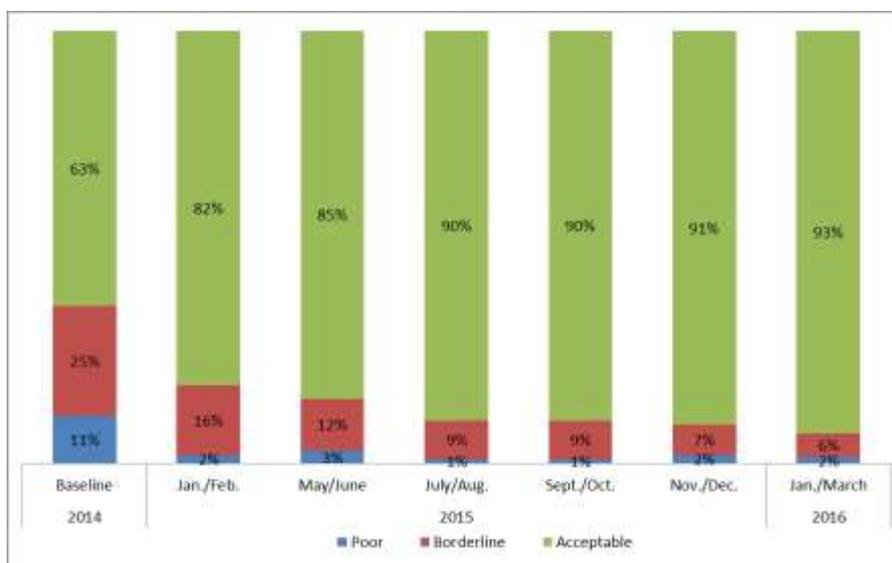
Year	Cycle	Average FCS	Standard Deviation	% change from Baseline
2014	Baseline	52	20.2	+34%
2015	Jan./Feb.	65	20.4	
	May/June	66	20.4	
	July/Aug.	68	18.7	
	Sept./Oct.	68	18.2	
	Nov./Dec.	69	18.1	
2016	Jan./March	70	16.7	

The latest monitoring cycle shows a considerable improvement in the acceptable food consumption score compared to the beginning of the e-card provision; a 30 point improvement from the baseline.

Borderline scores were the lowest across the cycles meaning that more people moved into the acceptable food consumption category and fewer people fell under the poor and borderline categories.

Male and female headed households had similar average food consumption scores and no significant differences were found to exist between them in quarter one. This shows that the households stabilised their food consumption habits as a result of the assistance.

Figure 1: Average food consumption score by cycle



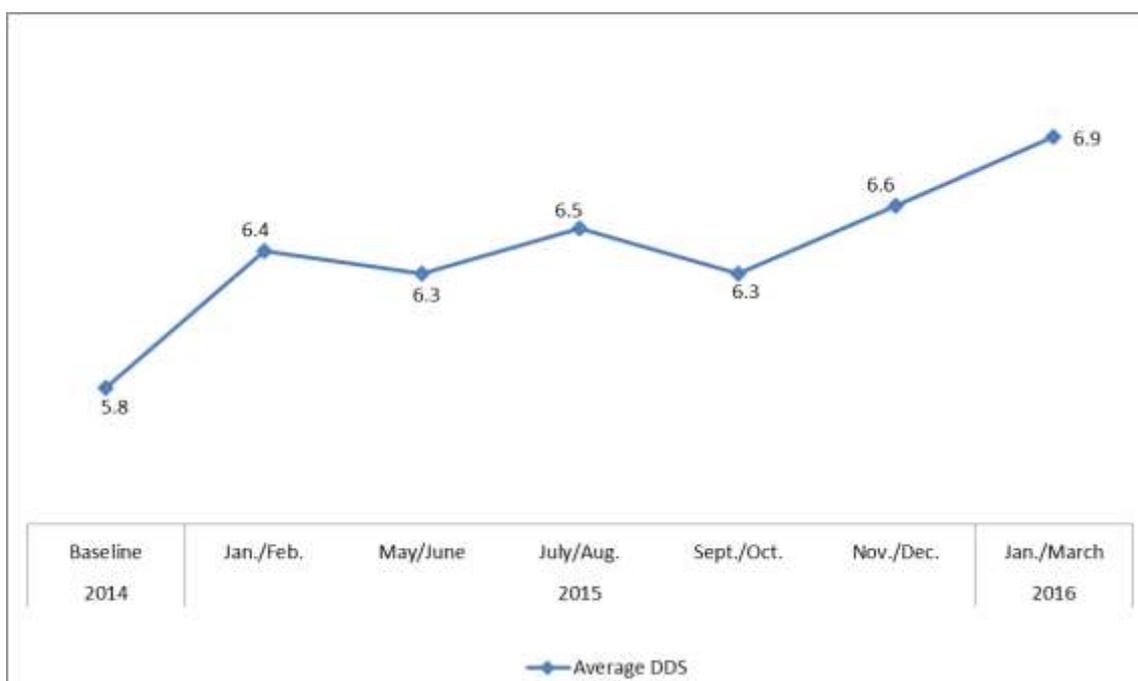
ii. Dietary diversity score

The average dietary diversity score increased during the first quarter. The recorded value was 6.9 compared to 6.6 in the previous cycle and 5.8 for the baseline survey.

It can be concluded that there is a statistical significant difference between the average dietary diversity score for the last two cycles and that average dietary diversity scores actually increased (p -value < 0.05). This means that beneficiaries were able to consume more diverse diet than they could 14 months ago.

There was no difference between male and female headed households as they had similar average dietary diversity scores. The average dietary diversity score was valued at 6.87 and 6.85 for male and female headed households respectively.

Figure 2: Average dietary diversity score by cycle



iii. Coping strategy index

The coping strategy index indicates coping mechanisms used as a response to a lack of food or money needed to buy food. Higher coping strategy indexes mean that households are adopting more coping mechanisms.

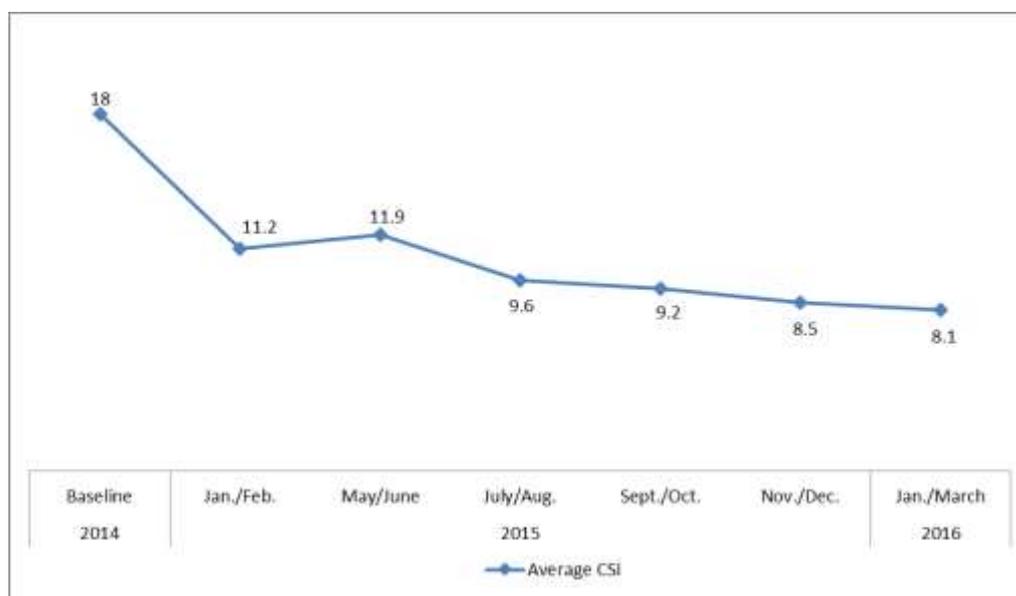
The coping strategy index was recorded at 8.14 whereas in the previous cycle it was 8.5. This means that households reduced the number of coping strategies by 4 percent compared to the previous cycle and by 55 percent compared to the baseline.

Male and female headed households responded differently in this regard to food shortages. Significantly the coping strategy index for male headed households was 7.8 and 10.0 for female headed households.

Table 2: Average coping strategy index by cycle

Year	Cycle	Average CSI	Standard Deviation	% change from Baseline
2014	Baseline	18.0	13.3	-55%
2015	Jan./Feb.	11.2	10.3	
	May/June	11.9	11.2	
	July/Aug.	9.6	10.3	
	Sept./Oct.	9.2	9.6	
	Nov./Dec.	8.5	9.5	
2016	Jan./March	8.14	9.2	

Figure 3: Average coping strategy index by cycle



iv. Uploaded and redeemed amounts

From November 2014 to March 2016, a total of US\$ 12 million was uploaded onto NPTP e-cards and US\$ 11.3 million was redeemed. The redemption rate was 94 percent.

Each month, 27,209 individuals benefited from this assistance. On average, and between November 2014 and March 2016, each member received US\$ 500 to buy food from WFP-contracted shops.

More than 90 percent of uploaded amounts were redeemed in five cazas in North Lebanon and Bekaa governorates. Around 45 percent of the total amounts were redeemed in the Akkar caza, followed by 24 percent in Tripoli and 13 percent in Minyeh-Donneyeh.

In total, there were 113,000 transactions across 350 WFP-contracted shops. On average, each transaction was valued at US\$ 106.

In general, more than half of the transactions were made during afternoons (60 percent). Around 70 percent of transactions were made in Tripoli and Akkar (37 percent and 32 percent respectively).

Figure 4: Redeemed amounts by caza (November 2014 – March 2016)

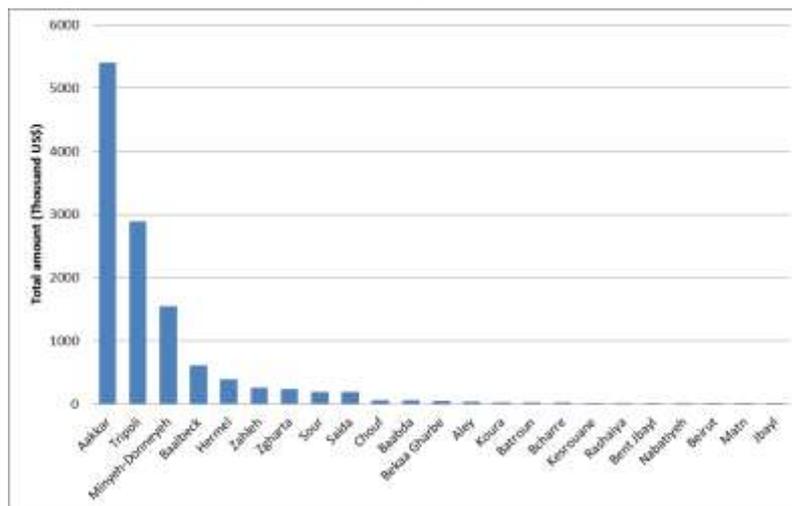
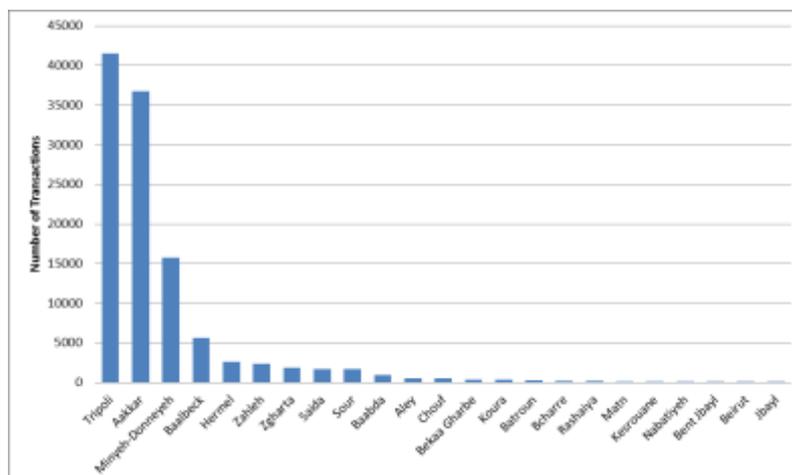


Figure 5: Distribution of transactions by Caza (November 2014 – March 2016)



v. Conclusion

The three food security indicators: food consumption score, dietary diversity score and coping strategy index continued to improve during the first quarter of 2016. NPTP beneficiaries were consuming more diverse foods and relying on fewer coping strategies than they had done before receiving food assistance.

Female headed households tended to use more coping strategies than male headed households during this quarter.

A total of US\$ 12 million was uploaded onto NPTP e-cards between November 2014 and March 2016.

A total of 113,000 transactions were made, averaging US\$ 106 each.



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