Fighting Hunger Worldwide

# OFF-CAMP SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

## A Food Security Report

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WFP would like to thank the Turkish Red Crescent for their ongoing partnership, without which this data collection would not have been possible.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from the PAB (pre-assistance baseline) data that was collected from June to December 2015. A total of 1,562 off-camp Syrian refugee households were interviewed in four provinces, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis and Sanlurfa.

The findings reveal a precarious food security situation of the off-camp Syrian refugee households, with almost one-third of the interviewed households being food insecure, leaving the majority of sixty-six percent at risk of food insecurity.

Among the key drivers of food insecurity are the high level of poverty and limited access to regular employment. More than ninety percent of the interviewed households are poor as per the Turkish national living standard, and the population mostly engages in temporary or seasonal employment as unskilled casual labourers.

Although the overall food security situation among the off-camp Syrian refugee households is a concern, some are more vulnerable than the others and therefore deserve a special attention. Characteristics of vulnerable households include the followings: residents of poorer neighbourhoods, households with higher dependency ratios, women-headed households, household heads with lower educational attainments, and recently-arrived households.

Food insecure and vulnerable households cope with the situation through adapting severe livelihood coping strategies that have a detrimental impact on lives and livelihoods. Urgent humanitarian action is required to mitigate a further deterioration of the food security situation among the vulnerable off-camp Syrian refugee households.

## BACKGROUND

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Syrian refugees have arrived in Turkey. It is estimated that Turkey now hosts some 2.5 million Syrian refugees across the country.

As of end 2015, World Food Programme (WFP) supports 151,000 refugees in eleven camps, in collaboration with the Government of Turkey. Since 2015, WFP has expanded its food assistance to off-camp refugee population, and to date, some 50,000 beneficiaries have been identified across four provinces in the southern Turkey, namely Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis and Sanlurfa.

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) exercise, Pre-Assistance Baseline (PAB) data was collected from off-camp Syrian refugee households prior to the WFP's food assistance intervention. The report presents descriptive analysis of the PAB data, providing a snapshot of the status of food security among the off-camp Syrian refugee households.

## SAMPLING AND LIMITATIONS

The PAB data was collected from June and December 2015. A total of 1,562 households were interviewed in four provinces, namely Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, and Sanliurfa. Households were selected randomly from the Kizilay (Turkish Red Crescent) registration list that include households that are eligible and non-eligible for WFP food assistance[1]. **Table-1** shows the breakdown of the interviewed households by province.

[1] Out of the total interviewed households of 1,562, seventy-six percent of households are identified as vulnerable and eligible for the WFP food assistance. The Kizilay registration list contained a total of 22,066 households.

**Table 1. Interviewed Households by Province**

| Province | Number of interviewed households | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Gaziantep | 720 | 46.1% |
| Hatay | 422 | 27.0% |
| Kilis | 116 | 7.4% |
| Sanliurfa | 304 | 19.4% |
| Total | 1,562 | 100% |

Due to lack of access to the Syrian refugee registration data[2], the sample is not representative of the off-camp Syrian refugees residing in these provinces, and a caution is required in extrapolating the findings beyond the interviewed households. Nevertheless, the report is expected to provide an indicative snapshot of the status of food security among the off-camp Syrian refugees in the four provinces.

## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

**Timing of arrival**: majority of the interviewed households reported that their first member(s) arrived in Turkey in more than a year ago. Almost eighty percent of the households responded that all their family members had been registered with the Government of Turkey.

**Demographics**: the average household size is five to six (5.5), with the mean dependency ratio at 1.39. **Table-2** provides a summary statistics of the household circumstances among the interviewed households.

**Table 2. Household circumstances**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Timing of arrival – first family member | | |
| | Arrived 12 or less than 12 ago | 28.3% |
| | Arrived between 13-24 months ago | 45.8% |
| | Arrived more than 24 months ago | 25.9% |
| Dependency ratio[3] (mean dependency ratio 1.39) | | |
| | ≤ 0.5 | 26.0% |
| | > 0.5 and ≤ 1.0 | 25.5% |
| | > 1.0 and ≤ 1.5 | 14.7% |
| | > 1.5 and ≤ 2.0 | 14.9% |
| | > 2.0 | 18.9% |

**Women-headed households** account for a quarter of the interviewed households. The vast majority of the interviewed households are married, while eighteen percent of the households are widowed/separated or single. Almost eighty percent of the household heads' educational attainment is primary education or lower. **Table-3** presents the characteristics of household heads.

**Table 3. Characteristics of household heads**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sex of household heads | | |
| | Male | 74.4% |
| | Female | 25.5% |

[2] The Syrian refugee registration data is administered by the Director General of Migration Management (DGMM), Ministry of Interior of the Government of Turkey.

[3] Dependency ratio = (number of people aged between 0-14 and those aged 60 and over) / (number of people aged between 15 and 59). According to the published international statistics, age dependency ratio considers the population aged between 15 and 64 as non-dependents. In this report, however, the age range of 15-59 was used due to the unavailability of data on the population aged above 64.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Household heads marital status | | |
| | Single | 5.4% |
| | Married | 81.3% |
| | Divorced/ Separated | 2.4% |
| | Widowed | 10.9% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Household heads educational attainment | | |
| | None | 35.6% |
| | Primary education | 43.4% |
| | Secondary education | 16.3% |
| | Higher education/university or higher | 4.5% |

**Housing conditions**: the majority (62%) of the interviewed households live in rented apartment, followed by unfinished building or garage (28%). The mean average living space per capita is 11.8 square meters (median = 10 square meters).

**Table 4. Housing condition**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Housing type | | |
| | Apartment | 61.5% |
| | Unfinished shelter, garage | 27.9% |
| | Separate room | 9.1% |
| | homeless/tents, collective shelter | 1.4% |

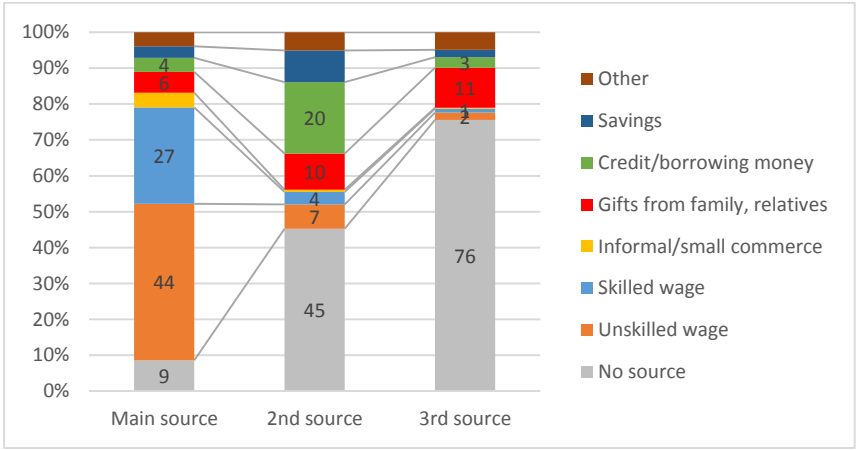
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Occupancy | | |
| | Unfurnished rental | 90.40% |
| | Furnished rental | 5.80% |
| | Hosted (for free) | 1.80% |
| | Owned apartment | 1.10% |
| | Squatter | 0.50% |
| | Shelter provided through humanitarian assistance | 0.40% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Toilet | | |
| | Improved toilet | 42.80% |
| | Not improved (traditional pit, open air) | 57.20% |

**Employment**: more than eighty percent of the interviewed households have at least one working member, out of which only sixteen percent of them reportedly have a member(s) employed regularly. This is to say that most of the refugee households rely on incomes from seasonal or temporary employments.

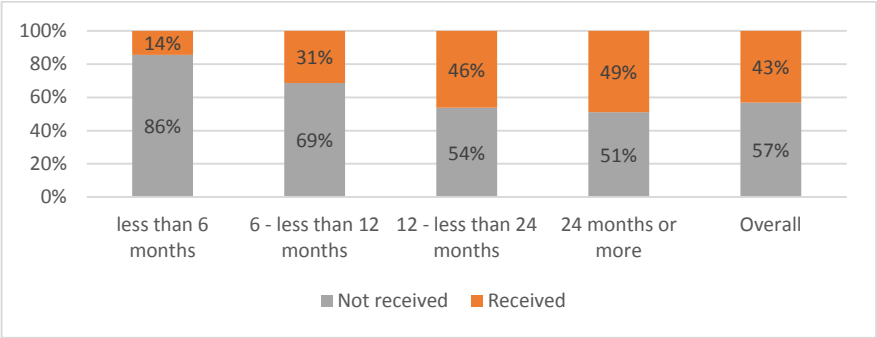
**Income sources** among the interviewed households are mostly unskilled wage labour, followed by skilled wage labour. Other sources cited by the households are: gifts from family or relatives, credit or borrow money, and savings. While most of the households have access to income-generating activities, their options to diversity income sources are extremely limited. Almost half of the interviewed households reportedly have no secondary source of income, and the most cited secondary source is credit/borrowing money, followed by gifts from family or relatives. **Figure-1** presents the main, second and third income sources reported by the households.

**Figure 1. Income sources**



**External assistance**: forty-three percent of the interviewed households reportedly received assistance, mainly from non-government institutions. The assistance, however, was mostly either one-off assistance (65%), or it used to be regular but stopped (27%). Only three percent of the interviewed households benefit from regular assistance at the time of the data collection. Newly-arrived refugees are less likely to have received any assistance (**Figure-2**).

**Figure 2. Access to external assistance by timing of arrival**



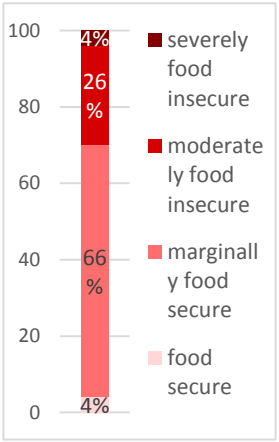

## FOOD SECURITY

The status of household food security is analysed applying the WFP's standard methodology "Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security" (CARI). CARI looks at two domains, namely current status and coping capacity. For each domain, relevant indicators are employed: food consumption for current status; and poverty lines as well as livelihood coping indicator for coping capacity. For each indicator households are classified into different levels of food insecurity to derive a food security index. See **ANNEX-I** for the detail computation process of CARI.

The table below present the result of the analysis. The interviewed households are characterized by an acceptable level of food consumption with poor coping capacity: i.e. households' minimum level of food consumption is mostly met but their coping capacity is stretched with a high level of poverty and a large proportion of households adopting severe or moderate coping strategies. Overall, thirty percent of the households are food insecure, leaving the majority of sixty-six percent vulnerable to food insecurity (marginally food secure).

**Table 5. CARI Classification**

| Domain | | Indicator | Food Secure (1) | Marginally Food Secure (2) | Food Insecure | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Moderately Food Insecure (3) | Severely Food Insecure (4) |
| Current Status | Food Consumption | Food Consumption Group | 71.4% Acceptable consumption | - | 22.6% Borderline consumption | 6.0% Poor consumption |
| Coping Capacity | Economic Vulnerability | Poverty | 6.6% Non-poor | | 74.6% Poor | 18.8% Food poor |
| | Asset Depletion | Livelihood coping strategy | 29.4% No coping | 33.0% Stress coping | 22.7% Crisis coping | 14.8% Emergency coping |
| **Food Security Index Shares** | | | **4%** | **66%** | **26%** | **4.0%** |
| | | | | | **30%** | |

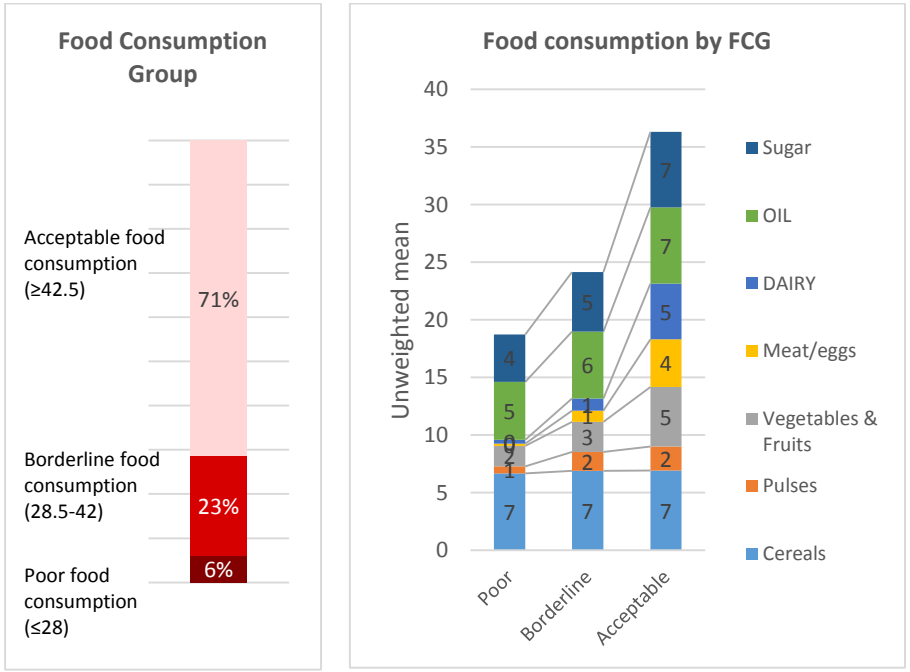



| Food security classifications | | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Food insecure | Severely food insecure | Extreme food consumption gaps, OR extreme loss of livelihood assets |
| | Moderately food insecure | Significant food consumption gaps, OR marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with irreversible coping strategies |
| Marginally food secure | | Minimally adequate food consumption without engaging in irreversible coping strategies |
| Food secure | | Adequate food consumption without engaging in typical coping strategies |

## FOOD CONSUMPTION

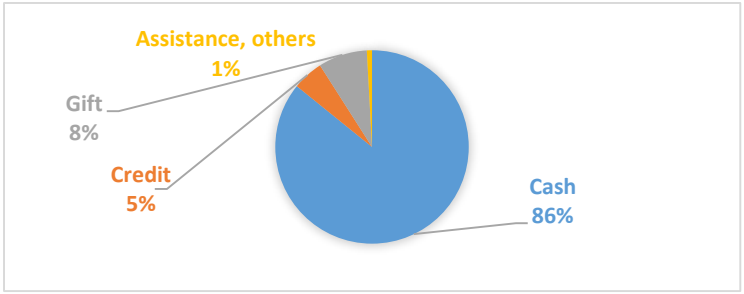
Measured by the frequency and the diversity of the foods consumed over the past 7 days, the food consumption among the majority of the interviewed households is mostly acceptable. Twenty-nine percent of the households are borderline or poor consumption with significant food consumption gap, and those households under these categories typically consume cereals, oil and sugar almost daily, vegetables and daily products every other days, and pulses twice a week, while meat or eggs is rarely consumed (**Figure-3**).

**Figure 3. Household Food Consumption**




The major food source is market purchase with cash (86%), followed by gift and credit, at 8% and 5% respectively (**Figure-4**).

**Figure 4. Food Sources**

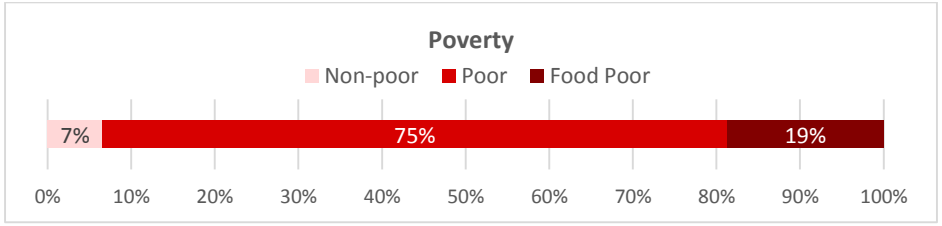



## ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

### POVERTY

As per the Turkish national poverty lines[4], the poverty rate among the interviewed households are extremely high with ninety-three percent of the households below the poverty line, and nineteen percent below the food poverty line.

**Figure 5. Poverty status**



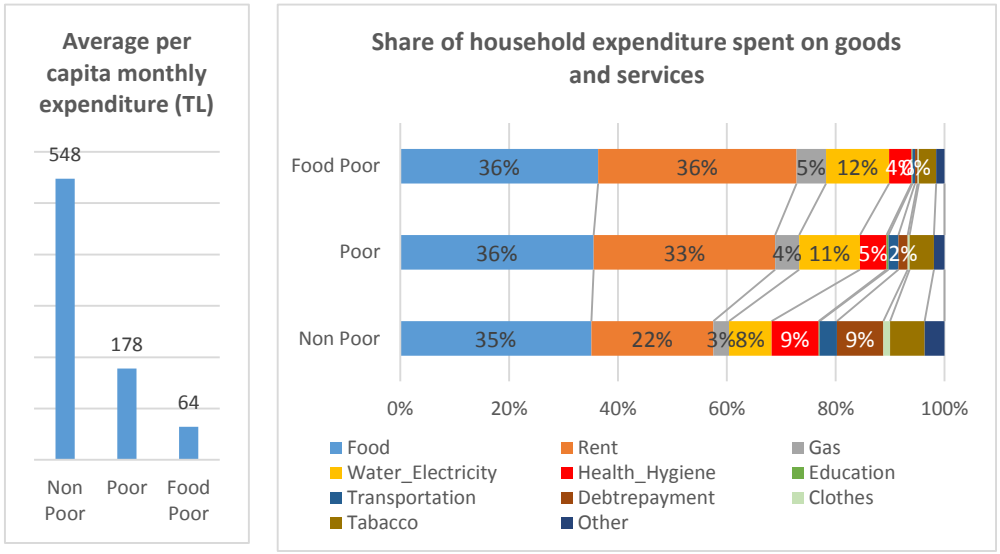

[4] See ANNEX for the detail descriptions about the poverty lines.

## EXPENDITURE

Household spent on average 180 TL per capita per month (median=153 TL). The per capita expenditure is significantly low among the food poor households with 64 TL on average (median=74 TL), followed by the poor households with the average of 178 TL (median=164 TL), whereas the non-poor spend 548 TL (median=457 TL).

The major household expenditure is spent on food, followed by rent and utilities - gas, water, and electricity. The proportion spent on food is similar across the wealth groups at 35-36 percent, while the share of rent and utility is higher among the poorer households: more than half of the household expenditure is spent on rent and utilities among the food poor households, whereas the rate is thirty-three percent among the non-poor households.

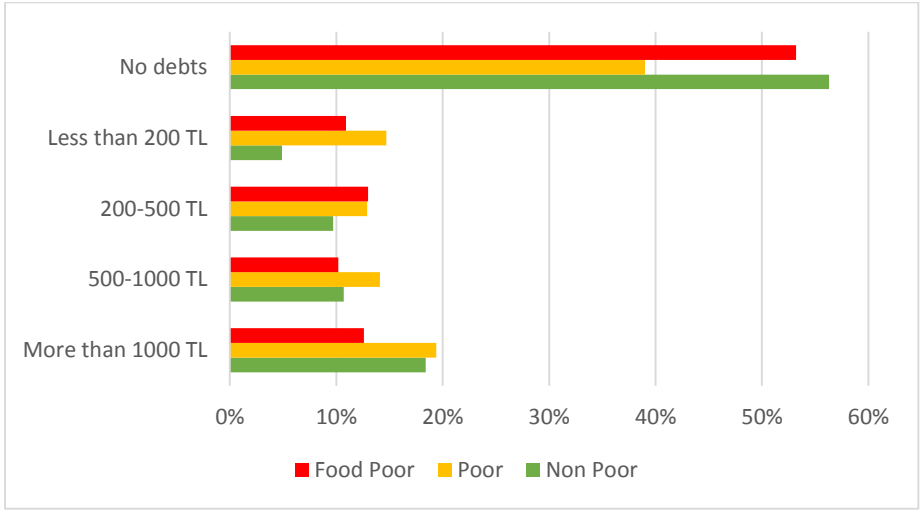
**Figure 6. Expenditure pattern among the food poor, poor and non-food poor**




## DEBT

Overall more than half of the interviewed households are reportedly in debt. Those households that are under the poverty line and above the food poverty line are more likely to be in debt. It is worth noting that the rate of indebted households is lower among the food poor (extreme poor), which may be attributed to their limited capacity to borrow money due to their impoverished circumstances.

**Figure 7. Household debt by poverty status**



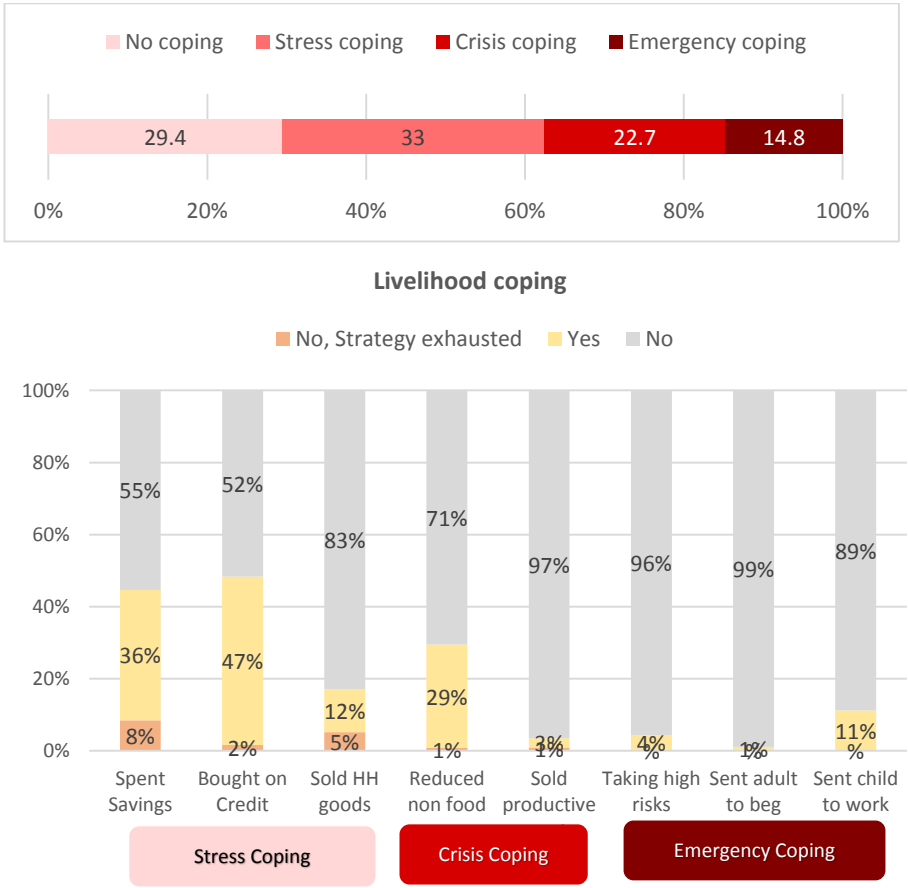

# COPING STRATEGIES

## LIVELIHOOD COPING

More than two-thirds of the interviewed households reportedly used livelihood coping strategies due to lack of money to buy food or other basic needs. Thirty-eight

percent of the households resorted to emergency or crisis livelihood coping, such as selling productive assets or sending children to work, undermining future productivity and capacity to cope.

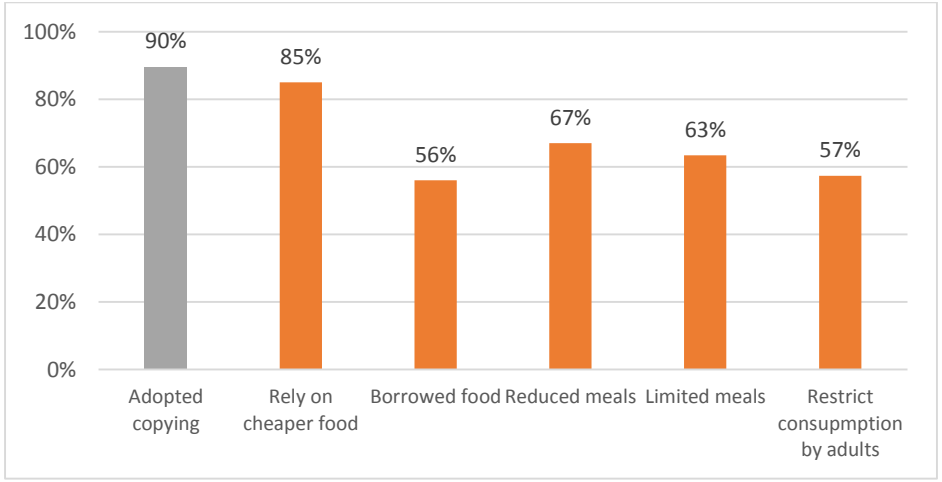
**Figure 8. Livelihood coping strategies used by households**




## CONSUMPTION BASED COPING

Households were asked if they had to employ consumption-based coping due to lack of food or money to buy food over the past seven days. Almost ninety-percent of the interviewed households adopted some form of coping. Most commonly cited coping strategies are “rely on cheaper foods (85%)”, “reduce number of meals (67%)”, and “limit portion size (63%)”.

**Figure 9. Consumption-based coping adopted by households**




## PROFILE OF THE FOOD INSECURE

In this section, the association between household food insecurity and household characteristics/circumstances is explored.

## GEOGRAPHY

***Provinces with higher poverty rates among Turkish nationals are likely to host larger proportions of food insecure off-camp Syrian refugees.***

The distribution of the food insecure households varies by province. Higher rates of food insecure households are observed in Sanliurfa (43%) and Hatay (38%) compared to the other provinces (20.2% and 26.8% for Gaziantep and Kilis respectively). It is worth noting that the poverty rates among the Turkish nationals in these provinces are higher[5].

## DEMOGRAPHY

***Food secure households are likely to have a smaller household size and a lower dependency ratio.***

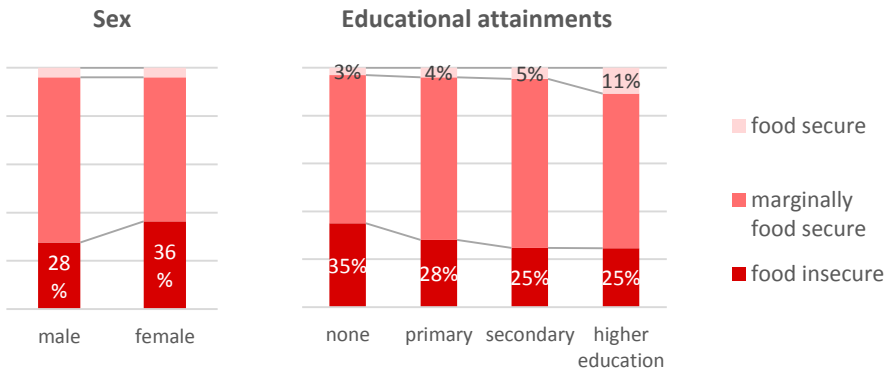
The mean average household size among the food secure households is 3.9, compared to marginally food secure (5.7) and food insecure (5.5). Dependency ratio is low among the food secure at 0.74, compared to the others (marginally food secure at 1.44 and food insecure at 1.38).

***Women-headed households and households with their heads with lower educational attainments exhibit a higher rate of food insecurity.***

Thirty-six percent of women-headed households are food insecure while the rate is lower among the male-headed households at twenty-eight percent.

Households with their heads having no educational attainments are likely to be more food insecure compared to the educated household heads. Thirty-five percent of households are food insecure among the non-educated heads of households while the rate is twenty-seven percent among the educated household heads. It is worth noting that the level of attainments of primary, secondary or higher education do not seem to have a strong influence over the household food security status. The rates of food insecure households are similar among the household heads with primary, secondary and higher education.

**Figure 10. Household food security by household heads (hhh) characteristics**

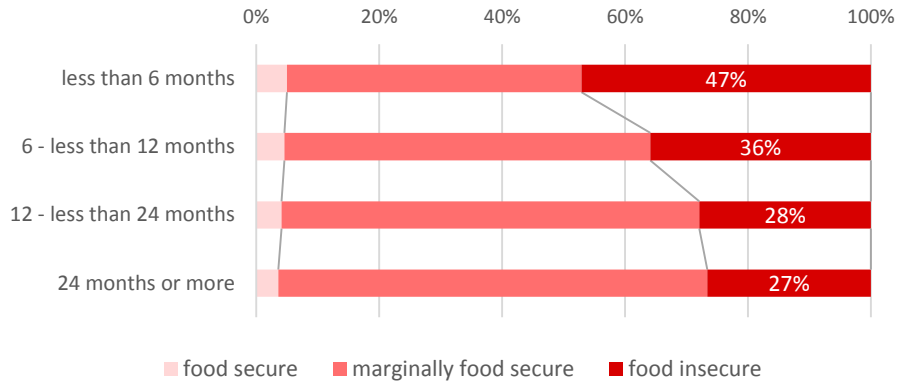



***Recently-arrived households are more likely to be food insecure.***

A striking difference of household food security status is observed among the recently arrived off-camp refugee households compared to those who arrived more than a year ago. Food insecurity is extremely high among the households that arrived less than six months ago (47%), followed by 6-12 months ago (36%), and more than one year (27%).

[5] According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, poverty rates in Sanliurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep are 17.3%, 17.8%, and 13.5% respectively (60% of the median income) in 2014. (TSI 2015)

**Figure 11. Household food security by arrival timing of the first family member**



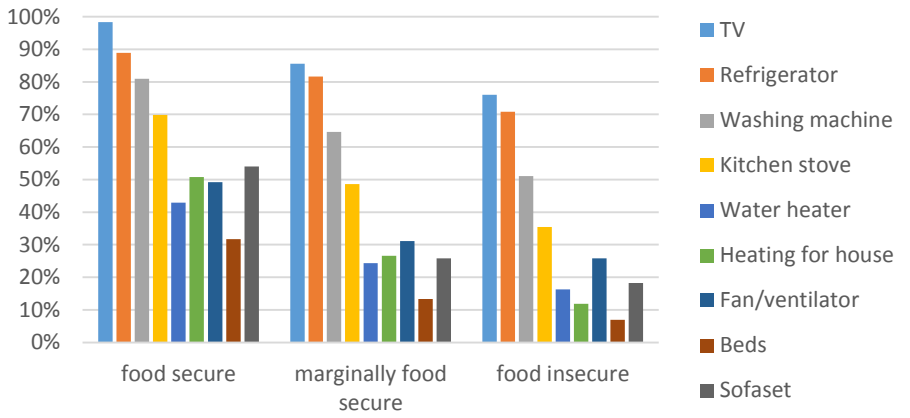

## HOUSING

***Food insecure households live in shelter with smaller per capita living space with limited household assets.***

The average per capita square meter is at 10.7 among the food insecure households, followed by 11.9 and 18.3 for the marginally food secure and the food secure households respectively.

Household asset ownership vary by asset. Those assets such as television, refrigerator, washing machine are owned by most of the households regardless of the food security status, whereas other assets like bed, sofa set, water heater, heating facility for housing, are less likely to be owned by food insecure households. Overall, food secure households own more household assets.

**Figure 12. Household asset ownership by food security status**

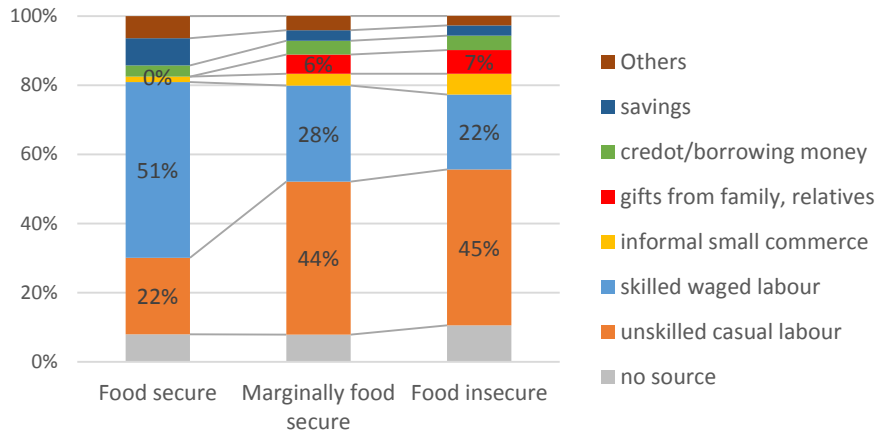



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

***Poverty and access to stable employment opportunities are strongly associated with household food security status.***

Almost all the food insecure households are poor, and a higher rate of extreme poor (food poor) is found among the food insecure households. While most of the households have access to income generation opportunities, food insecure households are likely to engage in seasonal or temporary employment, mostly working as unskilled casual labourers. Forty-five percent of food insecure households cited unskilled casual labour as the major source of income, whereas more than half of the food secure households (51%) reported skilled wage labour as the main income source. These findings suggest that food secure households have more likely to have access to better terms of employment (**Figure-13**)

**Figure 13. Household main income source by food security status**




***Food insecure and vulnerable households cope with the situation through rationalizing the consumption as well as adopting severe and often irreversible coping strategies.***

The use of higher frequencies of severer consumption based coping was observed among the food insecure households. The mean average reduced coping strategy index is significantly higher among the food insecure households at 37 compared to the food secure households at 10. **Figure-14** illustrates the summary of consumption-based coping strategies employed by households with different food security status.

Food insecure households are likely to use livelihood coping strategies extensively (**Figure-15**). It is worth noting that more than a quarter of food insecure households employ crisis or emergency coping strategies that have an detrimental impact on lives and livelihoods, compromising future productivity and capacity to cope.

**Figure 14. Consumption-based coping strategies adopted by households**

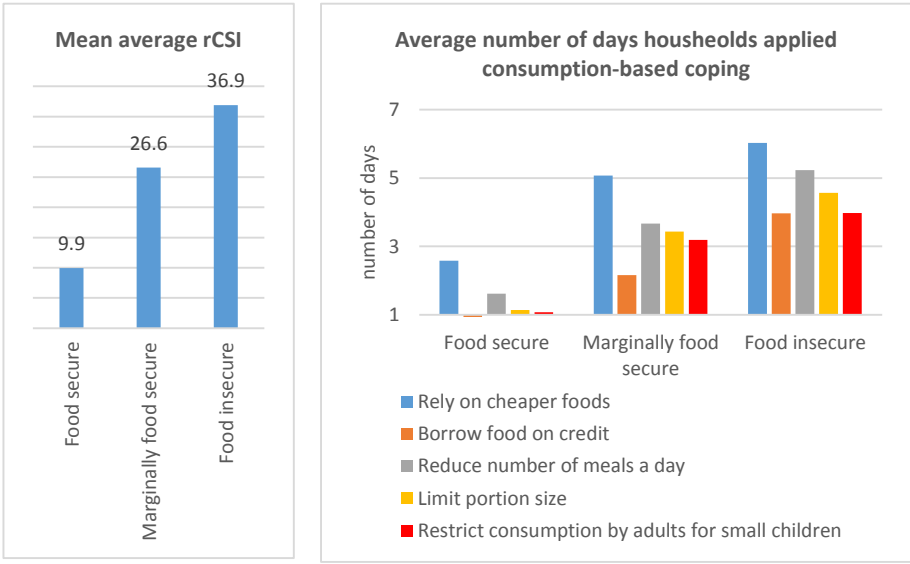
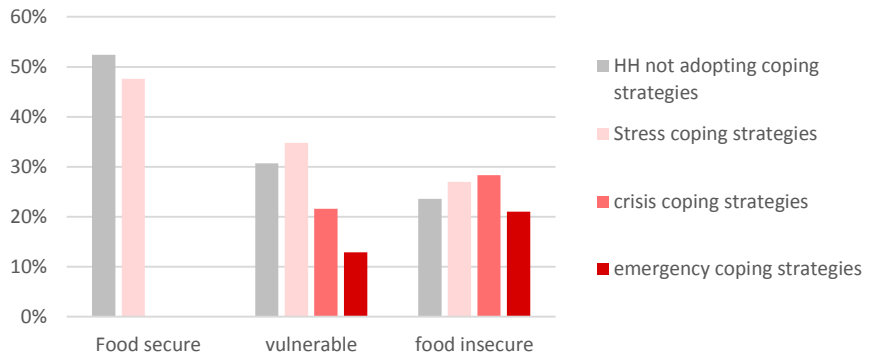



**Figure 15. Livelihood coping by household food security status**



## CONCLUSION

The findings reveal a precarious food security situation among the off-camp Syrian refugee households: almost one-third of the households are food insecure, with the majority of sixty-six percent are at risk of food insecurity. It is worth noting that the rates are comparable to the off-camp refugees in Lebanon[6]. Food insecure and vulnerable households cope through adapting various coping strategies. The frequent use of livelihood coping strategies, especially crisis and emergency coping, call for immediate action by humanitarian communities to mitigate a further deterioration of food security situation among the most vulnerable.

[6] In Lebanon, the rates of food insecure households and marginally food secure households are at 24% and 65% respectively (VASyr 2015).

## ANNEX: COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO REPORTING INDICATORS (CARI) OF FOOD SECURITY

The CARI is a method used for analyzing and reporting the level of food insecurity within a population. When CARI is employed, each surveyed household is classified into one of four food security categories (see table below). This classification is based on the household's current status of food security (using food consumption indicators) and their coping capacity (using indicators measuring economic vulnerability and asset depletion).

To construct CARI console, three indicators are looked at, namely food consumption score (FCS), poverty, and livelihood coping strategies. These indicators describe two domains related to food security: current food consumption; and coping capacity (summary of economic vulnerability and asset depletion).

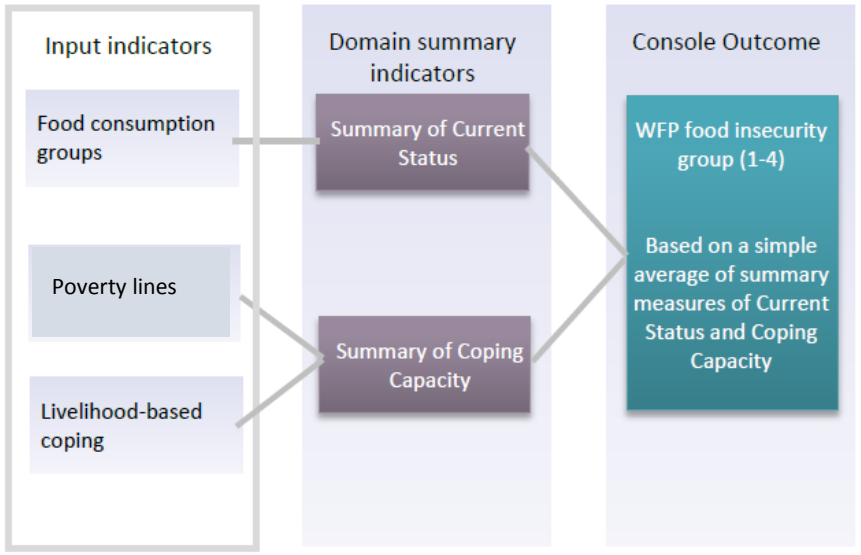
The overall food security classification is calculated with the following steps:

1) Outcomes of each console indicator are converted into a standard 4-point classification scale. The 4-point scale assigns a score (1-4) of each category, as shown below:

| 4-point scale category | Score |
|---|---|
| Food secure | 1 |
| Marginally food secure | 2 |
| Moderately food insecure | 3 |
| Severely food insecure | 4 |

2) Construct the domain summary indicators each for current status and coping capacity by averaging the scores of indicators for each domain;
3) Average the scores of current status and coping capacity domains, which is rounded to the nearest whole number to derive the summary index of food security index (FSI).

Figure: Flow-graph of the CARI console components




The table below provides a description about the three categories (in this report the last two categories: 'Moderately Food Insecure' and 'Severely Food Insecure' has been merged as 'Food Insecure') belonging to FSI. **The percentage of food insecure population is derived by summing the two most severe categories (severely and moderately food insecure).**

| | |
|---|---|
| Food secure | Able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical coping strategies |
| Marginally food secure | Has minimally adequate food consumption without engaging in irreversible coping strategies; unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures |
| Food insecure | Has extreme food consumption gaps, OR has extreme loss of livelihood assets will lead to food consumption gaps, or worse |

Input indicators and their thresholds applied in this report are the followings:

| Domain | | Indicator | Food Secure (1) | Marginally Food Secure (2) | Food insecure | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Moderately Food Insecure (3) | Severely Food Insecure (4) |
| Current Status | Food Consumption | Food Consumption Group | Acceptable ≥42 | - | Borderline 28-<42 | Poor 0-<28 |
| Coping Capacity | Economic Vulnerability | Poverty Status | Total Expenditure > Poverty Line | | 100% food poverty line ≥ Total Exp ≤ 100% of poverty line | Total Exp ≤ 100% of food poverty line |
| | Asset Depletion | Livelihood coping strategy categories | None | Stress strategies | Crisis Strategies | Emergency Strategies |

Following section describes how outcomes the two indicators 'Food Consumption Group' and 'livelihood coping strategy categories' are derived.

*Food Consumption Group*

Food consumption score (FCS) is a proxy to measure the adequacy of household food consumption. FCS is calculated based on the frequency and diversity of food items consumed by households over the past seven days. The analysis is run on the frequency of consumption from one or more items from the following food groups:

- Cereals/pasta (e.g., wheat flour, bread, pasta)
- Pulses (e.g., beans, pulses)
- Meat (e.g., beef, goat, poultry, eggs, fish)
- Milk and dairy products (e.g., milk, cheese, yoghurt)
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Oils/Fats
- Sugar

Households are grouped together to create 3 household food consumption groups: poor, borderline and adequate food consumption groups. Thresholds for separating these three groups were generated by using a weighted food score. Each food group is given a weight based on its nutrient density and then multiplied by the number of days a household consumed one or more items from that group. Table below provides a breakdown on each food group and associated weight.

| Food items | Food Groups | Weight |
|---|---|---|
| Maize, rice, sorghum, millet, bread, pasta, and other cereals | **Cereals and Tubers** | **2** |
| Cassava, potatoes, sweet potatoes | | |
| Beans, peas groundnuts | **Pulses** | **3** |
| Meat, fish, eggs, fish, goat, poultry | **Meat/Fish** | **4** |
| Milk, yoghurt, cheese | **Milk and Dairy** | **4** |
| Vegetables | **Vegetables** | **1** |
| Fruit | **Fruit** | **1** |
| Sugar and sugar products | **Sugar** | **0.5** |
| Oils, fats and butter | **Oil** | **0.5** |

A rank is then given to each household depending on its total food score. The minimum score is 0 and the maximum score is 112. Note that the score is calculated weekly value. In this context:

- Households with poor food consumption have a food score of ≤ 28
- Households with borderline food consumption have a food score of 28.5 – 42
- Households with adequate food consumption have a food score of ≥ 42.5

*Poverty Status*

Counting the households which fall below the **national poverty line** is the most widely accepted approach for measuring a household's poverty status, or economic vulnerability. The poverty line represents the value –in local currency- of a standard consumption bundle of goods and services deemed adequate for an average adult to live satisfactorily. This consumption bundle comprises what has been determined as a person's minimum basic needs. The **food poverty line** is part of the **poverty line.** It is an estimate of the cost of consuming a suitable daily intake of calories for an adult. Essentially, it's the minimum cost of a food basket required to ensure sufficient calorie consumption.

In this report, the poverty lines are estimated based on the last available consumption-based Turkish national poverty lines dated 2010 (National Statistical Institute – NSI, 2010), adjusted with the inflation factors. The poverty lines vary by household size, and per capita poverty lines are higher with smaller household sizes. Taking an example of a household with five members, the food poverty line is estimated at 107 TL per capita, and the poverty line ("complete poverty line") is at 302 TL, whereas with the household size of two, the food poverty line and the poverty line are 157 TL and 442 TL respectively.

*Livelihood Coping Categories*

Livelihood coping strategies measure is a descriptor of a household's coping capacity. Households are categorized based on the severity of livelihood coping strategies employed. The indicator is derived from a series of questions regarding the household's experience with livelihood stress and asset depletion during 30 days prior to the survey. All strategies are classified into three broad groups of stress, crisis, and emergency strategies.
The coping strategies are ranked as followings in order of severity:

- Stress strategies, such as borrowing money or spending savings, are those which indicate a reduced ability to deal with future shocks due to a current reduction in resources or increase in debts;
- Crisis strategies, such as selling productive assets, directly reduce future productivity, including human capital formation;
- Emergency strategies, such as selling one's land, affect future productivity, but are more difficult to reverse or more dramatic in nature.

The livelihood coping strategy indicator is used to reclassify households into the CARI's 4-point scale based on the most severe coping strategy the household reported.