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SOCIAL SAFETY NET PROGRAMMES POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING SURVEY



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MAR'25

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

C-ESSN	Complementary Emergency Social Safety Net
SSN	Social Safety Net
DDS	Dietary Diversity Score
DGPC	Directorate General of Population and Citizenship Affairs
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
HEA	Household Economy Analysis
HH	Household
LCSI	Livelihood Coping Strategy Index
MoFSS	Ministry of Family and Social Services
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
ODK	Open Data Kit
PAB	Pre-Assistance Baseline
PMM	Presidency of Migration Management
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
TRC	Türk Kızılay

Executive Summary

The impact of SSN Programme is measured through Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), tracking indicators such as the Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (**LCSI**), Reduced Coping Strategy Index (**rCSI**), Food Consumption Score (**FCS**), and average debt.

The report provides an insight on the socio-economic conditions of refugee households in Türkiye, examines the effectiveness of the assistance in meeting essential needs, assesses household economic resilience through income and expenditure patterns, measures food security and coping strategies, and identifies implementation challenges to enhance programme accountability and effectiveness.

5,775
Households



Data was collected from **5,775 households** including, ESSN/ C-ESSN recipient and non-recipient households.

Throughout the report, findings were compared with the Pre-Assistance Baseline (**PAB**) Survey Report¹ published in August 2024.



¹ Türk Kızılay. (August 2024). Social Safety Net Programmes Pre-Assistance Baseline Survey Report. https://platform.kizilaykart.org/tr/Doc/rapor/SSN_PAB_Report.pdf

Key Messages



For both recipient and non-recipient households, a gap between income and expenditure was identified. In order to cope with this gap, **3 of the 4 households** are in debt.



Among the recipient households, **C-ESSN households are more vulnerable compared to ESSN households.**



Although most households seem to have an acceptable level of food consumption, mostly consumed food items that are low in nutritional value and follow an overall imbalanced diet.



Approximately **51.41%** of expenditure is directed towards critical items, primarily **food and rent** while additional resources are allocated for essential needs such as healthcare and utilities. Most needs are more likely met by borrowing.

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Social Safety Net (**SSN**) Programmes, financed by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (**DG NEAR**), is implemented through Türk Kızılay KIZILAYKART Platform with the Ministry of Family and Social Services (**MoFSS**) and supported by the Presidency of Migration Management (**PMM**) and Directorate General of Population and Citizenship Affairs (**DGPC**). The Social Safety Net (**SSN**) Programme supports vulnerable households under temporary protection and international protection with monthly cash assistance.

The SSN Programme has two primary pillars: Emergency Social Safety Net (**ESSN**) and Complementary Emergency Social Safety Net (**C-ESSN**) Projects. While the programme targets vulnerable population, the C-ESSN provides enhanced support tailored for individuals unable to engage in regular employment due to various constraints (like age and disability among others).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The PDM survey employed a cross-sectional design, offering a temporal snapshot of the specific conditions researched. The questionnaire covered a range of topics related to household demographic characteristics, income, expenditure, debt patterns, unemployment status, food security and coping strategies.

Data collection took place between May and October 2024 through outbound calls with recipient and non-recipient households. Prior to the initiation of the survey process, training and orientation sessions were conducted for enumerators, covering the data-collection tool, contextual background, methodology and ethical considerations. Data was collected by using the Open Data Kit (ODK) platform through 168 Kızılay Call Centre, ensuring efficient and accurate data capture. Subsequent to this process, data cleaning and analysis were performed to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

Sampling Frame and Area of Study

A stratified simple random sampling method was used to ensure national and regional representativeness. The target population is located in various regions with different socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, stratified sampling was applied to obtain a representative sample by dividing the population into distinct, non-overlapping subgroups called strata.

That stratified random sampling method was used and **5775 households** were selected with **95%** confidence level and **5%** margin of error.

Strata consisted of five different sub-groups; Aegean, Anatolia, İstanbul, Mediterranean and Southeast regions. İstanbul, the largest commercial centre in Türkiye, was recognised as a stratum in its own right because of its unique socio-economic position. In the second phase of sampling, a similar **95%** confidence level and **5%** margin of error was calculated for ESSN, C-ESSN and non-recipient household's disaggregation.



Limitations

Some limitations during the process should be recognised;

- » The collected data is based on self-reporting by households which may consequently be subject to biased answers or misinterpretations.
- » Non-respondent rate of the survey was **55 per cent**; the top three reasons for not responding were phone-number out of service (**31%**), call not answered (**26%**) and not reached after multiple attempts (**14%**).

OUTCOMES

Demographic Characteristics

There seems to be a balanced gender distribution with around **52 per cent** males and **48 per cent** females. An average ESSN household consists of **6.1 persons**, making up the most populated among the groups, while CESSN households consist of **5.5 persons** on average. In terms of the average number of children, once again ESSN households come first with **3.6 children**, compared to C-ESSN households with **2.95 children** and non-recipient households with **2.43 children**.

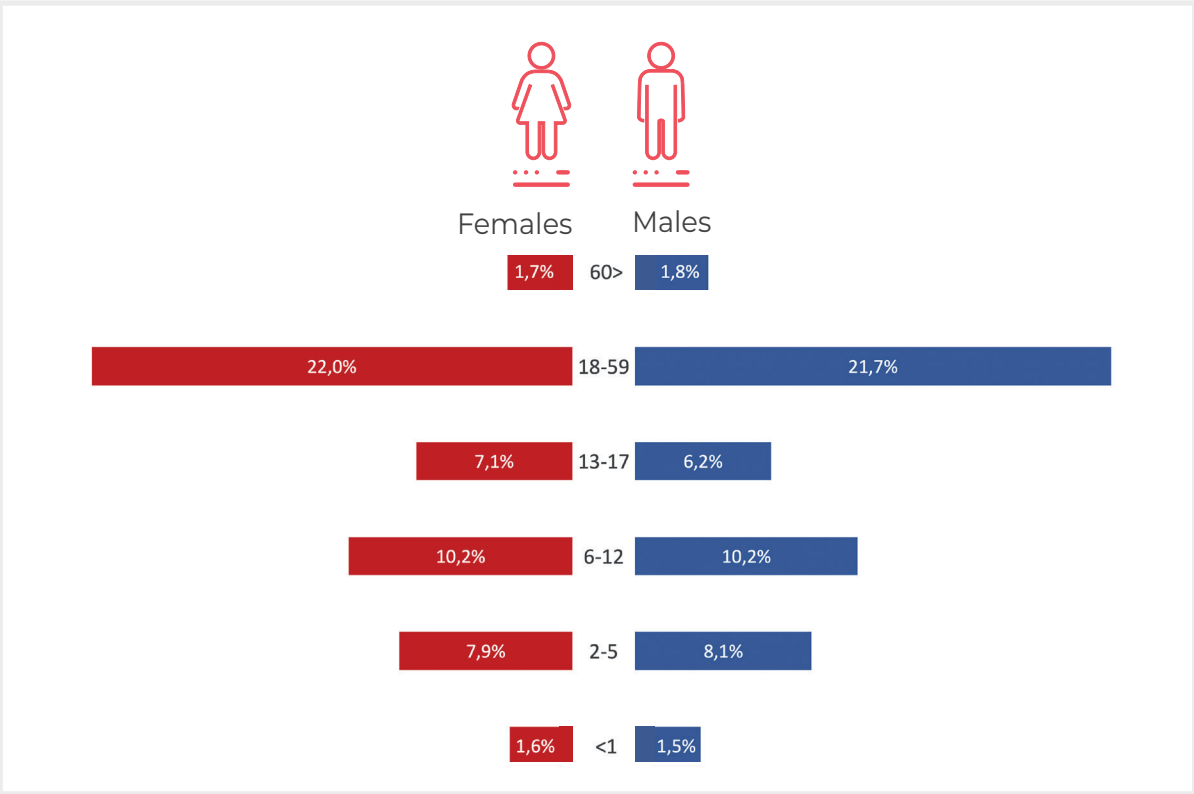


Table 1 Age and Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Shelter Conditions

Taking a closer look at the shelter conditions, around **94 per cent** of ESSN and non-recipient households, as well as **96 per cent** of C-ESSN households live in rental accommodations. This high percentage indicates the commonality of rental accommodations instead of homeownership among the refugee populations in Türkiye.

Hence, rent payment is one of the top spending items for almost all households. Half of the houses are in good shape, while the other half is in rather bad conditions. On average, half of the houses are of good quality and can cover the basic shelter needs of the households, while houses of poor quality cannot fully cover even the most basic shelter needs.

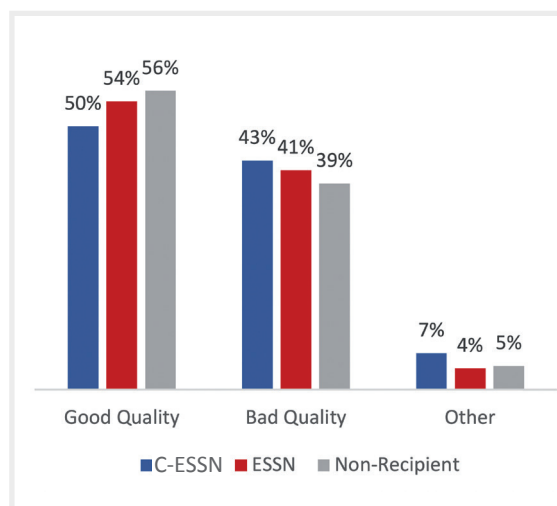


Table 2 Housing Conditions by Recipient Status



Household Economy Analysis (HEA)²

Income

According to **Figure 2**, household incomes have risen since the PAB study likely as a result of the increase of the national minimum wage and the transfer amount.

Income sources of households are interchangeable between ESSN, C-ESSN and non-recipients. Accordingly, unskilled labour, KIZILAYKART, skilled labour and cash assistance from other humanitarian organisations are reported as top income types.

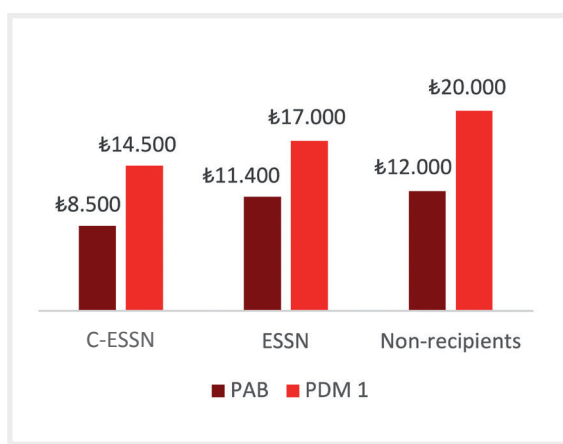


Table 3 Median Household Income

On a striking note, cash assistance is the main source of income for **25 per cent** of the C-ESSN recipients. It is observed that these households tend to have lower income compared to other groups as **25 percentage** of households have no labour income at all. Thus, C-ESSN households have a relatively higher percentage of child labour in comparison to other groups (**5 per cent** for C-ESSN households and **3 per cent** for other households).

Among recipient groups, the primary source of income is a combination of skilled and unskilled labour for most of the households, while a smaller number of households rely on assistance. Compared to the PAB report, there has been an increase in individuals citing assistance as their main source of income. On a positive note, the number of non-recipients engaged in skilled labour has shown improvement.

		C-ESSN		ESSN		Non-Recipient
PAB	Unskilled labour	66.1%	Unskilled labour	78.6%	Unskilled labour	69.5%
	KIZILAYKART	13.1%	Skilled_labour	11.4%	Skilled_labour	19.9%
	Gifts	8.7%	KIZILAYKART	6.5%	Gifts	3.2%
	Skilled_labour	5.7%	No income	1.1%	Formal	1.5%
PDM 1	Unskilled labour	55.4%	Unskilled labour	69.9%	Unskilled labour	63.8%
	KIZILAYKART	24.9%	KIZILAYKART	14.9%	Skilled_labour	25.9%
	Skilled_labour	7.1%	Skilled_labour	11.4%	Gifts	2.5%
	Gifts	3.5%	Gifts	1.4%	KIZILAYKART	2.4%

Table 4 Main and Second Income Sources

² HEA provides a quantified picture of people's income sources, expenditure patterns, and debt behaviors.

Expenditure

There has been a significant increase in total expenditure at both the household and individual levels. However, this rise does not indicate an improvement in families' economic conditions. Instead, the biggest reason for the jump in expenditures is the increase in inflation. With no minimum wage increase in late Q2 and persistently high inflation, both individual and household purchasing power have been steadily eroded.

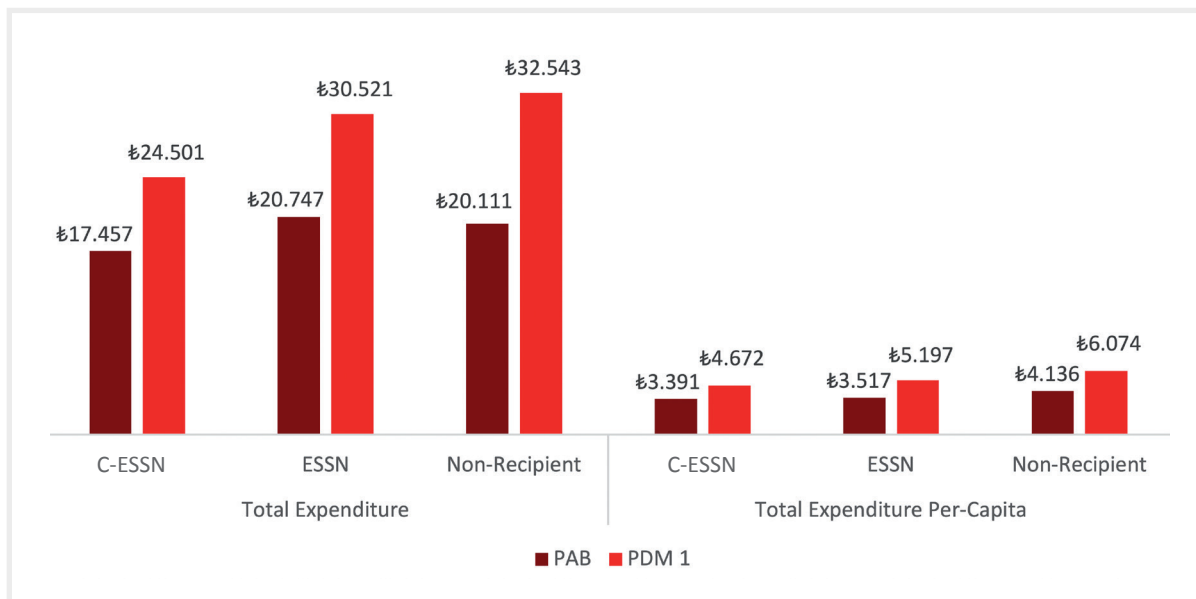


Table 5 Total and Per-Capita Expenditure by Recipient Status

The top five household expenditure categories are rent, food, clothing, education, and hygiene which have remained unchanged. This underscores that, despite rising expenditures, many households are unable to allocate resources beyond basic necessities. Comparison of household expenditure data reveals that approximately **80%** of expenditures of both PAB and PDM households prioritize basic needs, leaving barely no space for other expenses.



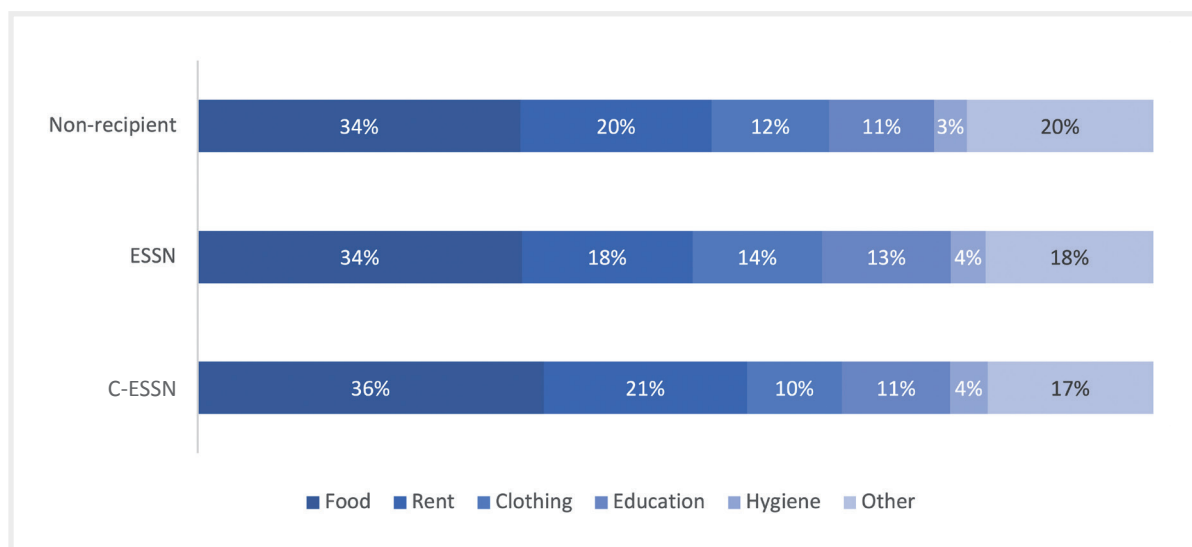


Table 6 Share of Expenditure Items

Regionally, İstanbul achieved the highest expenditure levels, while southeast region remained the lowest. Nevertheless, comparing the regional cost of living according to the poverty line calculations published by TURKSTAT³, it is noteworthy that İstanbul is the most expensive region, while the provinces in the Eastern and Southeast regions are the cheapest. This indicates that the higher expenditures in the İstanbul region and the lower expenditures in the Southeast region are driven by differences in purchasing power rather than variations in goods and services consumed.

Debt

Debt rates are similar among ESSN, C-ESSN and non-recipient households indicating the commonality of borrowing. Households mostly borrow from local shops, friends and relatives. The rising inflation and decreasing purchasing power push vulnerable households to shop on loan in order to access their basic needs. In the previous market assessment report⁴, it was found that loaning has become more prevalent as a payment strategy that local vendors feel obliged to accept as a way to maintain their business.

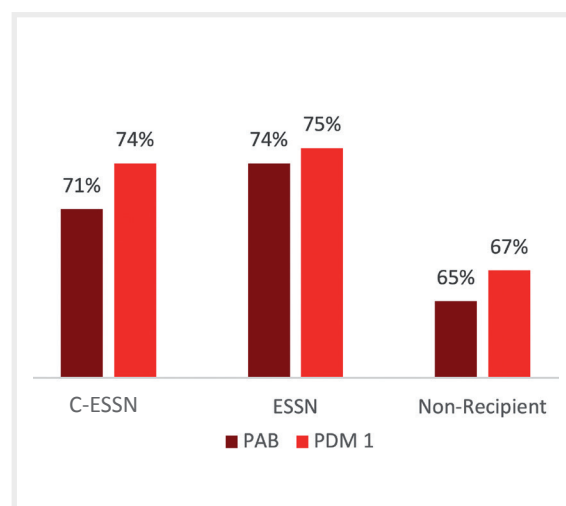


Table 7 Debt Status "Yes" by Recipient Status

³ Data obtained from <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn=95&locale=tr>

⁴ Türk Kızılay. (October 2024). SNN Program 2nd Market Assessment Report. Unpublished.

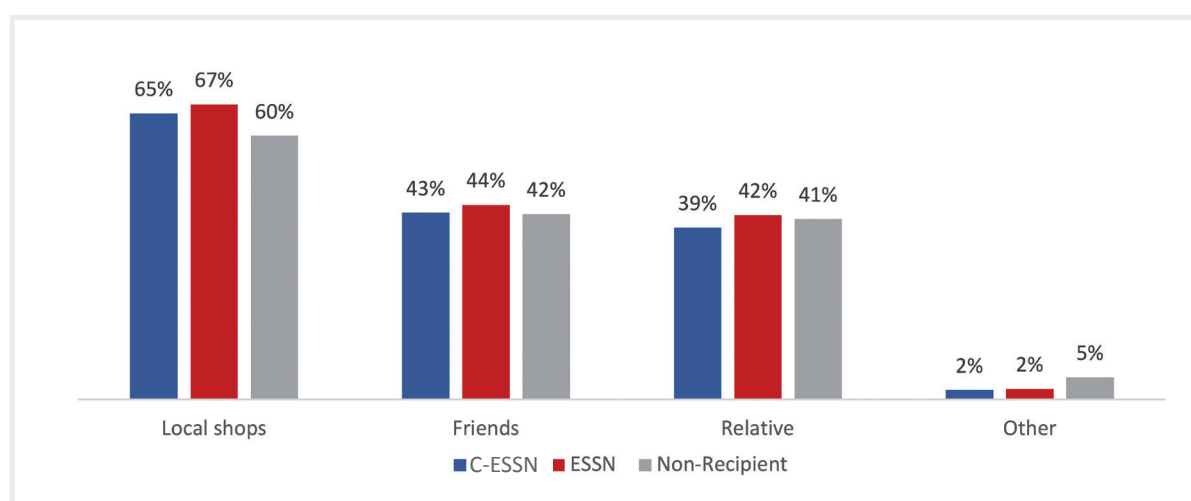


Table 8 Debt to Whom by Recipient Status

Thus, household income and expenditure levels are not balanced. This gap indicates that households borrow to meet their basic needs and try to sustain their lives in a cycle of debt. However, indebtedness can cause psychosocial problems as a result of continuous financial stress, and can even limit children's access to education, as families experiencing debt stress often have to sacrifice their children's education and health expenditure.⁵

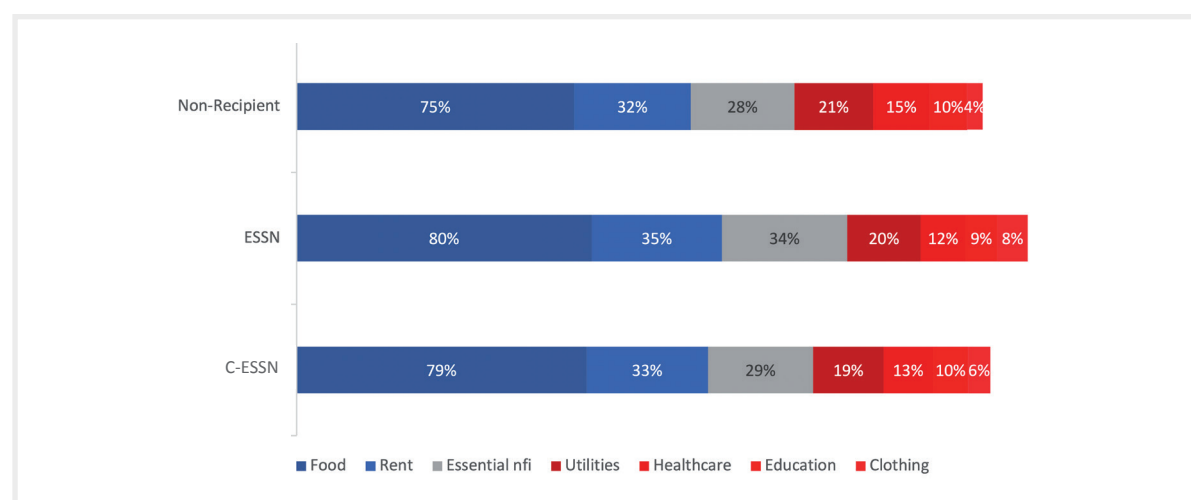


Table 9 Reasons for Debt by Recipient Status

Among all three household groups, an increase in debt was observed in the PDM data when compared with the PAB, though not statistically significant. Overall, the rising debt levels indicate a continued reliance on borrowing as a coping strategy, further reinforcing recipients' vulnerability.

⁵ World Health Organization (WHO). Mental health and psychosocial support for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants on the move in Europe, <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/publications/mental-health-psychosocial-support-refugees.pdf>

Cost of Living Analysis

The Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)⁶, which provides in-depth information on household living standards, was calculated for both recipient and non-recipient groups with the purpose of assessing the economic capacity of households to meet their basic needs and examine the level of poverty.

The MEB threshold based on PAB and PDM data are: **22,321 TRY** for C-ESSN households, **25,446 TRY** for ESSN households, and **23,728 TRY** for non-recipient households.

The comparison reveals that **70 per cent** of ESSN and non-recipient households have surpassed the MEB threshold, whereas C-ESSN households show no improvement, with only **41 per cent** meeting the threshold, which signifies the vulnerability of C-ESSN households.

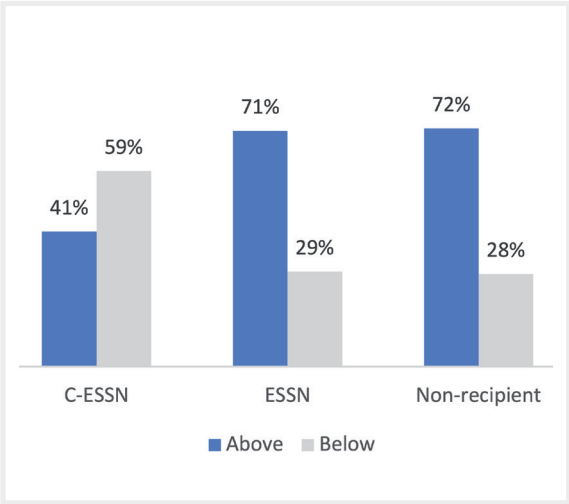


Table 10 MEB Status by Recipient Status



⁶ MEB represents the estimated monthly cost of meeting the basic needs of a household in accordance with Sphere standards. For more information, please visit https://platform.kizilaykart.org/en/Doc/rapor/MEB_report.pdf

Reduced Coping Strategy Index

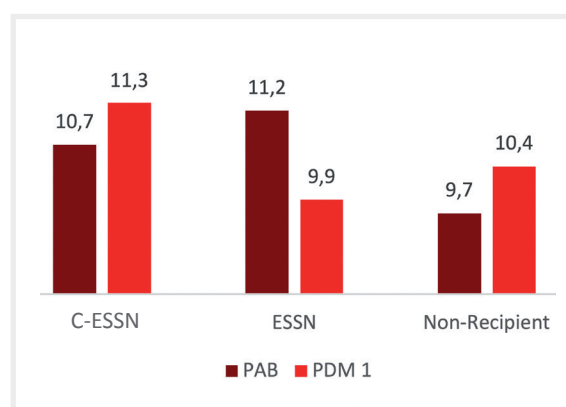


Table 11 rCSI Scores by Recipient Status

C-ESSN and non-recipients rely on coping strategies at similar or slightly higher rates than ESSN recipients. The most common strategy across all groups is consuming less preferred or cheaper food, with slightly higher prevalence among C-ESSN and ESSN recipients both at **80 per cent**, compared to non-recipients at **78 per cent**.

The PDM 1 data highlights that rCSI⁷ score of ESSN households have decreased in comparison to the PAB data. Yet, no significant change in the rCSI components is observed other than opting for less preferred food. These factors suggest that despite KIZILAYKART assistance, a constant number of households are in poor food security conditions. This may be due to households' reliance on readily available strategies to cut their expenditures. Such findings are concerning as they may have long-term implications for the physical development and overall well-being of children in food insecure families.

The rCSI indicator of the PAB and PDM 1 studies reveal that ESSN households are found to be better off, while C-ESSN households and non-recipient households are worse off. The main reason for this is that while households have reduced the strategy of borrowing food, they have resorted to skipping meals instead.

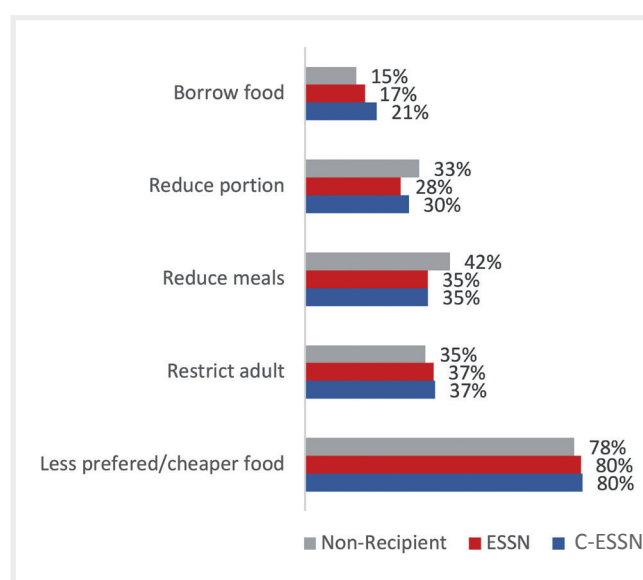


Table 12 rCSI Components by Recipient Status

⁷ The reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) is an indicator used to compare the hardship faced by households due to a shortage of food. The index measures the frequency and severity of the food consumption behaviours the households had to engage in due to food shortage in the 7 days prior to the survey. For more information, see: World Food Programme (WFP), Livelihood Coping Strategies for Food Security, available at <https://resources.vam.wfp.org/data-analysis/quantitative/food-security/livelihood-coping-strategies-food-security>.

Livelihood Coping Strategy Index

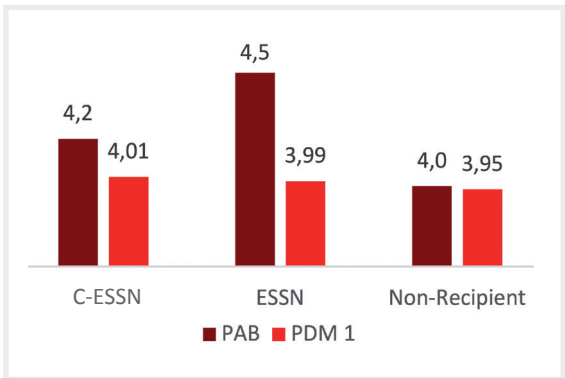


Table 13 LCSI Scores by Recipient Status

The LCSI⁸ score remains unchanged for non-recipients while showing a decreasing pattern regarding C-ESSN and ESSN households. Regarding crisis-level coping mechanisms, there is a reduced tendency among recipients to sell productive assets, with little change observed in the overall crisis segment.

In the stress category, households above the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) threshold are more likely to rely on savings, whereas those below the MEB are more inclined to borrow food. In crisis category, MEB-above households tend to cut health and education expenses, while MEB-below households are more likely to withdraw children from school. In emergency category, although no significant difference is observed between MEB-above and MEB-below households, the former are more likely to return to their country of origin or relocate, whereas the latter are more inclined to resort to child labour.



8 The Livelihood Coping Strategies – Food Security (LCS-FS) is an indicator used to understand households' medium and longer-term coping capacity in response to lack of food or money to buy food and their ability to overcome challenges in the future. The indicator is derived from a series of questions regarding the households' experiences with livelihood stress and asset depletion to cope with food shortages. For more information, see: World Food Programme (WFP), Livelihood Coping Strategies for Food Security, available at <https://resources.vam.wfp.org/data-analysis/quantitative/food-security/livelihood-coping-strategies-food-security>.

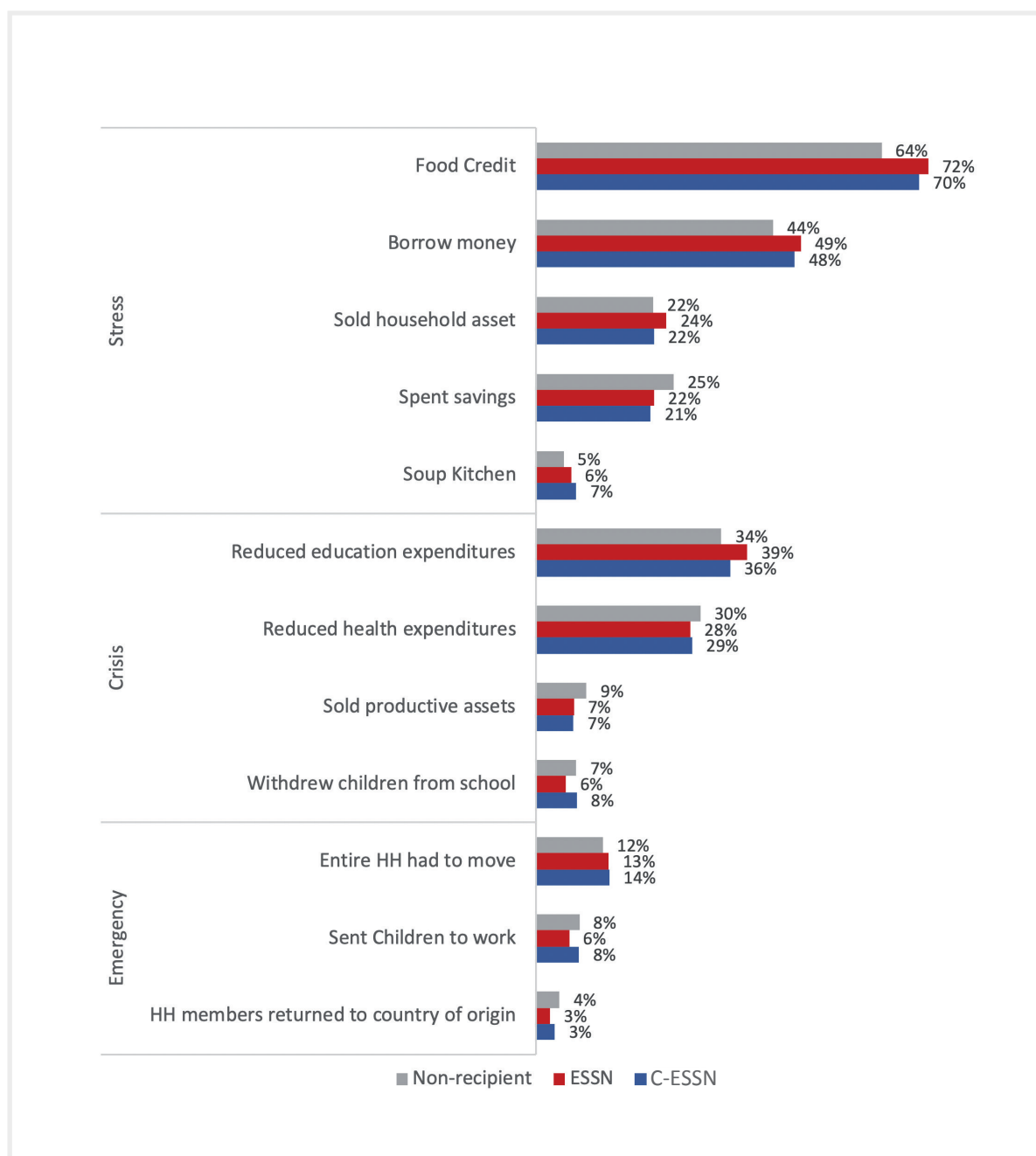


Table 14 LCSI Components by Recipient Status

Food Consumption Score

Food Consumption Score (FCS) indicator is a composite score based on households' dietary diversity, food consumption frequency, and relative nutritional value of different food groups. The FCS is calculated by asking how often households consume food items from the 8 different food groups (plus condiments) during a 7-day reference period.⁹

The findings reveal the highest consumed food item as cereal, marking almost 7 days per week.

Although consuming cereals may provide sufficient daily caloric intake, their low nutritional value, combined with the minimal consumption of nutrient-dense foods such as red meat and cheese leads to an imbalanced diet. As a result, while most households fall into the **"acceptable"** category based on FCS thresholds, their diets remain lacking in variety and do not fully meet the criteria for a healthy, safe, and nutritionally adequate food intake.

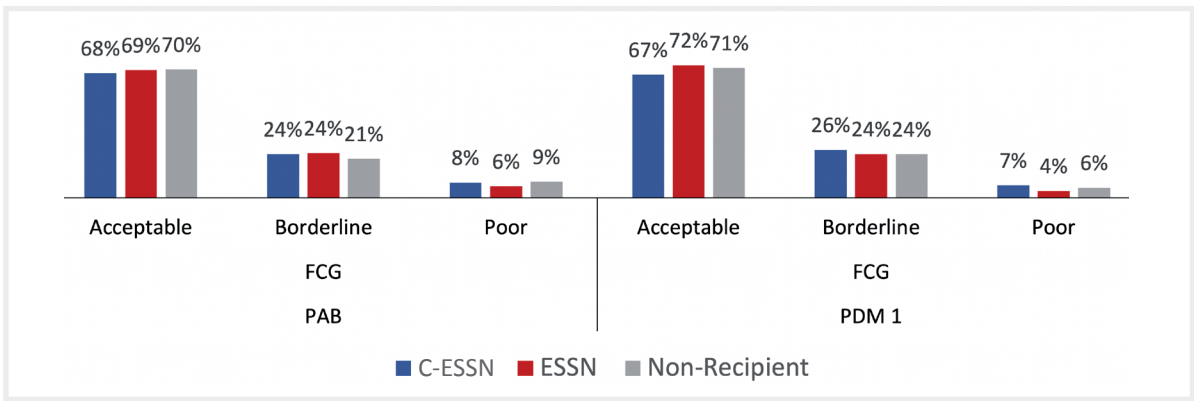


Table 15 FCGs by Recipient Status

Overall FCS of ESSN, C-ESSN and non-recipient households remain similar. A detailed analysis of main food groups reveals that within the protein group, households consume eggs on average of 4 days per week, while red meat and white meat are consumed less frequently, at 0.2 days and 1 day per week respectively. The high level of **"acceptable"** food consumption score in the graph is largely driven by the frequent consumption of eggs. In regards to the dairy products, households are able to access milk 4 days a week and cheese 1 day a week, further highlighting the vulnerability of these families in maintaining a diverse and nutritionally adequate diet.

⁹ The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is the most commonly used food security indicator by WFP and partners. The FCS module collects data on sources of the consumed foods acquired by households. Although the information is not widely used and reported, it is useful in understanding the household's level of self-reliance (e.g., own production or cash purchases) or dependency on outside sources (e.g., food assistance). Thus, this information should also be collected as part of the standard module. For more information, see: World Food Programme (WFP), Food Consumption Score (FCS), available at <https://resources.vam.wfp.org/data-analysis/quantitative/food-security/food-consumption-score>.

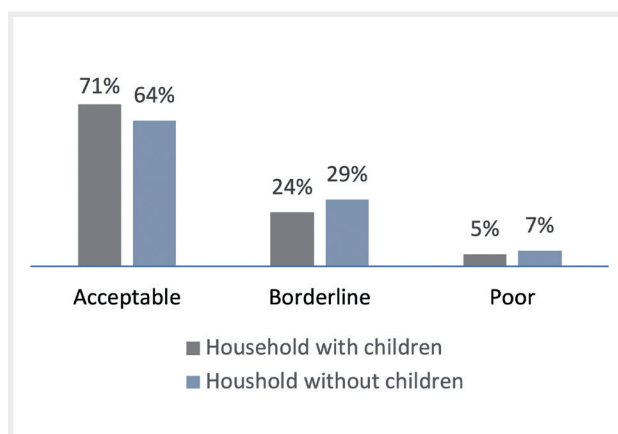


Table 16 FCG by Children Status

Comparing the FCG of households with and without children, the acceptable level shows a significant decrease in households without children. This implies that families prioritize eggs and milk to nourish their children, which largely contributes to their higher food consumption scores.

Increasing the transfer value implemented in January 2024 had a positive impact on the resilience of households, especially that of C-ESSN. These showed a more marked improvement in their LCSI scores compared to ESSN households. This would indicate an increase in the ability to handle financial stress and meet basic needs. The effect of the transfer value was higher in C-ESSN households, both because of the intra-household exclusion in ESSN households and the transfer amount increased more in C-ESSN households. Improvement in coping capacities among the C-ESSN households following the increase in the transfer value, underlines the critical role of cash-based interventions in mitigating the negative impacts of economic hardship and supporting household stability in humanitarian aid.



CONCLUSION

The findings of this report underscore the critical role of the SSN Programme in supporting Türkiye's vulnerable refugee population by alleviating economic hardship, reducing reliance on negative coping strategies, and modestly enhancing food security. However, despite these positive outcomes, the majority of recipient households continue to face substantial economic challenges due to persistently high living costs and income shortfalls.

The gap between income and expenditure is one factor contributing to high indebtedness for the majority of both recipient and non-recipient households. Specifically, three out of four surveyed households reported being in debt, with most of this indebtedness driven by the need to meet basic expenses such as rent, food, and utilities. Although most households are able to keep food consumption at an acceptable level, the quality of diets remains poor, as the majority of diets depend on very low-value foods, reflecting a generally imbalanced diet. Thus, the multidimensional poverty¹⁰ of recipient households, in particular the C-ESSN households are found to be more vulnerable compared to the ESSN households. Households are unable to channel their incomes into savings and struggle to meet their basic needs with their incomes.

Overall, these insights emphasize the necessity of sustained and adaptable cash-based interventions to effectively respond to household vulnerabilities. Strengthening financial stability through increased transfer values and complementary livelihood programs will be crucial in mitigating economic distress and enhancing long-term well-being. As economic conditions evolve, ensuring the continued effectiveness of the SSN Programme remains essential in maintaining the resilience of refugee populations in a dignified manner.



¹⁰ World Bank. Multidimensional Poverty Measure. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/multidimensional-poverty-measure>

RECOMMENDATIONS

This monitoring study provides a snapshot of the impact of the Social Safety Net (SSN) cash assistance program in Türkiye from May to October 2024. The findings of this report might be operationalized as follows:

- » **Increased cash transfer amounts (including top-ups) to ensure that households can access basic needs.** Many households struggle to make ends meet and resort on coping strategies such as taking loans or selling their assets. Beneficiaries' relying on reduced coping strategies is another indicator that the assistance is not enough to cover essential household expenses. Beneficiaries are unable to catch up with the monthly increase in essential product prices, such as food, due to monthly inflation. Revising the transfer amount and top-ups enough to cover the MEB Gap is strongly recommended to ensure households meet their basic needs without compromising long-term well-being.
- » **Reassessing present tiered-based cash assistance to allocate resources equitably among the most vulnerable target groups.** In order to address the diverse needs of the target population, assistance can be equitably distributed to the most dependent groups who rely on the assistance more due to their specialized needs. The present tiered cash assistance programs should be revised and extended addressing specific needs of vulnerable target groups.
- » **Enhanced referral to livelihood and employment initiatives to ensure self-supporting and sustainable income generation opportunities.** The existing socio-economic empowerment referral mechanisms can be enhanced for the inclusiveness of the target population to vocational trainings, job-placement facilitation activities, awareness raising sessions on work opportunities and networking meetings to ensure the financial independence of the beneficiaries.

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