



ADAPTING TO ADVERSITY

FINDINGS OF POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING SURVEY (ROUND 17) | OCTOBER 2023



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PHOTO CREDITS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

About the Programme

The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Programme provides unrestricted, unconditional cash assistance to people living under temporary or international protection in Türkiye to help them meet their basic needs. The ESSN is funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and implemented through a partnership between the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Türk Kızılay. As of July 2023, the ESSN has provided monthly assistance to more than 1.49 million people.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of ESSN assistance on the socio-economic conditions of recipients, with particular focus on their level of expenditure, debt, coping strategies, and food consumption. Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) aims to track changes over time and compare these to the ones experienced by non-recipient households.

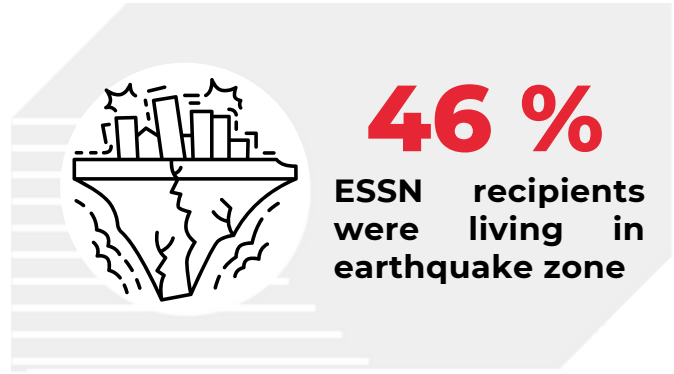
Objectives of the study

- 1 To measure the extent to which minimum expenses such as food, rent, utilities, non-food items (NFI), health, education, etc. are met.
- 2 To determine if/how income, debt, and expenditure are critical in understanding households' economic resilience.
- 3 To determine the severity of the coping strategies adopted when facing economic/financial difficulties.
- 4 To assess how secure food consumption habits are.



Background & statistics

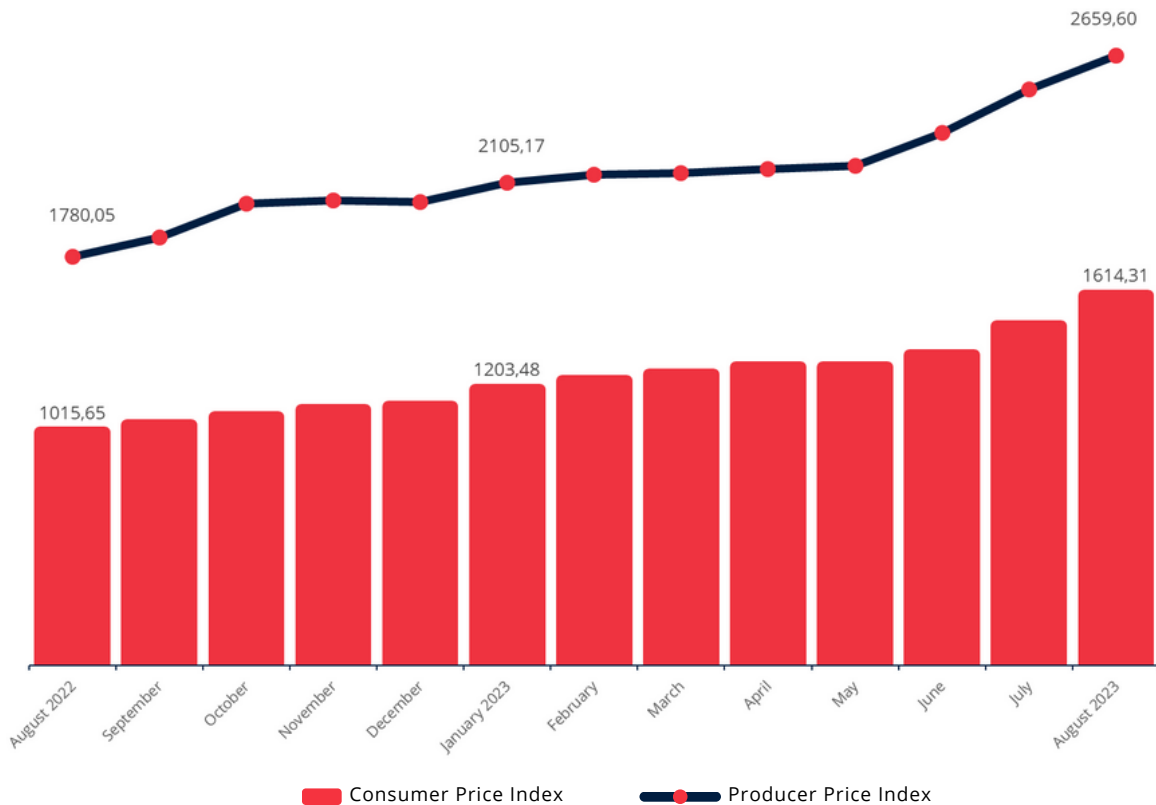
Starting from late 2021, the country has witnessed a persistent rise in the overall cost of living. Even though the annual rate of change showed a diminishing trend starting from December 2022, since July 2023, it started to rise again. By August 2023, the annual inflation rate was almost 59¹ per cent, with essential expenses such as food, rent, and utilities continuing to experience on-going price hikes.



Türkiye experienced a devastating series of earthquakes on 6 February, in Pazarcık - Kahramanmaraş, with magnitudes over 7.5. The earthquakes which affected 11 provinces in south-east Türkiye have irreversibly changed the lives of over 16 million people, including refugees. Approximately 49² per cent of registered refugees used to live in Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Osmaniye, Adana, and other earthquake-affected provinces while this was 46³ per cent for ESSN recipients. People lost their lives, homes, and livelihoods, sustained injuries, and also relocated as a result of the earthquake. In order to ease the hardships faced by those impacted, both national and international organizations delivered assistance in the form of search and rescue operations, shelter, in-kind, cash and other assistances.

ESSN assistance continued to support households in need during this difficult time. Findings of PDM 17 suggest that 96 per cent of the earthquake-affected ESSN recipients could access cash after the disaster, which indicates that there were no major disruptions in access to ESSN assistance, and for those who did, the main reason was crowdedness or queues in the ATMs and banks. Between May and July 2023, in addition to regular and economic top-ups, earthquake top-ups were also provided to those who were affected.

Figure 1: Annual Rate of Changes in CPI and PPI (%)



1 • According to Turk Stat, the annual inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages was 72.86 per cent; for housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels, it was 24.97 per cent. For more detailed information, please visit: <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Consumer-Price-Index-August-2023-49650>

2 • For more detailed information, please visit: <https://goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

3 • July 2023 Türk Kızılay Admin Data

CHAPTER 2: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Research design

This PDM 17 survey adopted a longitudinal research design. This type of study provides a snapshot of a certain situation that was investigated within a particular timeframe. For PDM 17, data collection was conducted between May - July 2023. The unit of analysis is household. Different from previous surveys, questions regarding the earthquake were also included in the questionnaire to observe the changing conditions of those who used to live in or continue to live in the affected area. Data was collected by enumerators from toll-free 168 Kızılay Call Center in Gaziantep on the phone.

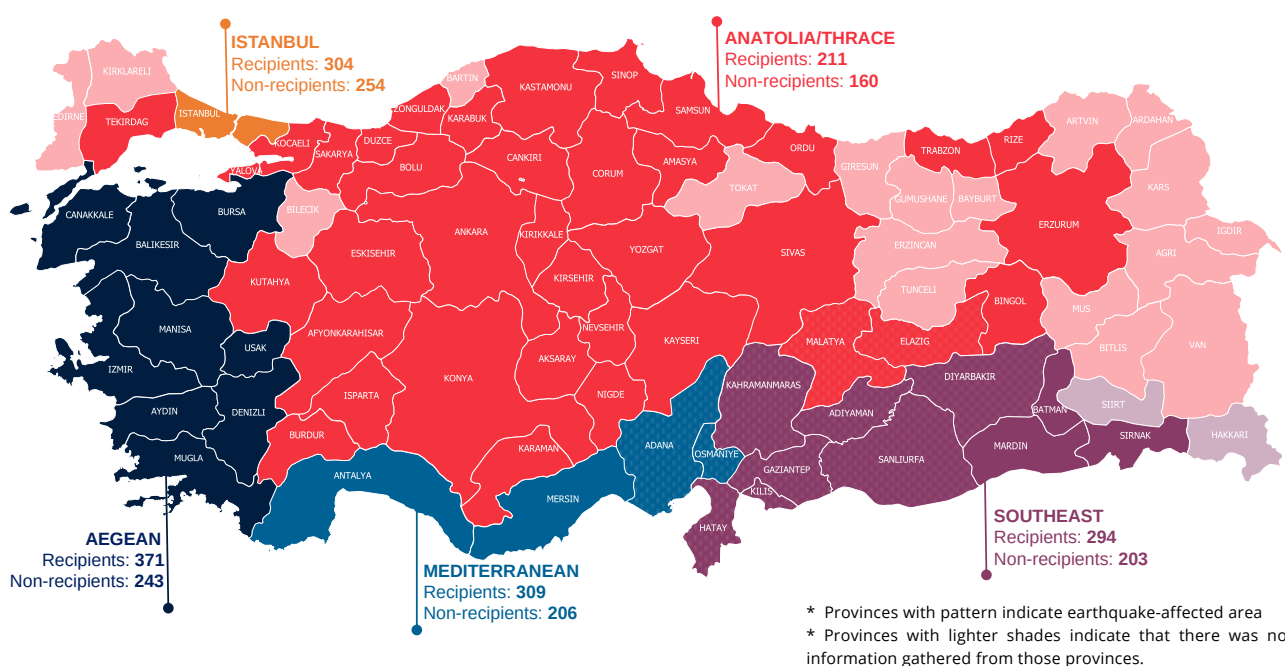
Area of study

Considering that the ESSN is a nationwide programme with recipients spread across the different regions with diverse socio-economic statuses and with 80 per cent of the ESSN applicants being concentrated in 10 provinces, a nationwide sampling may lead to sampling errors. For a better estimation of study parameters, regional stratification based on the proportion of applicant households was applied. Aegean, Anatolia, Istanbul, Mediterranean, and South-East regions were used as stratum based on the similarities in programme application figures and relatively in socio-economic dynamics. Besides, Istanbul, the main commercial city of Türkiye, was accepted as a stratum by itself because of its distinct socio-economic status.⁴ Independent random samples were drawn from these five regions as per Figure 1.

Sample

Samples for ESSN recipient and non-recipient groups were identical to PDM 16 households. Due to various reasons, i.e. non-response, refusal to participate, phone number out of service, the survey was conducted with 2,555 individuals in total, 1,489 ESSN recipients and 1,066 non-recipients (excluding C-ESSN recipients). In total, 761 participants were earthquake-affected. Comparisons were done using the results from PDM 16 conducted between November 2022 - January 2023, which had 1,927 ESSN recipient and 1,924 non-recipient participants.

Figure 1: Map of Study Area



4 • The province is also considered an independent stratum by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat).

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

Income

Household labour income rose more than 57 per cent within approximately six months, from PDM 16 to PDM 17. While labour income is TRY 8,000 for ESSN recipient households, it was TRY 8,500 for non-recipients. Total income, on the other hand, is TRY 8,500 and TRY 9,000, respectively. One of the reasons for this increase could be seasonal agricultural work.

For those affected by the earthquake, the income values are significantly lower than the rest of the participants. Total income is TRY 6,000 for ESSN recipient and TRY 7,500 for non-recipient groups. Unskilled labour (65 per cent vs 55 per cent) and skilled labour (20 per cent vs 35 per cent) are still the main sources of income for ESSN recipient and non-recipient households.

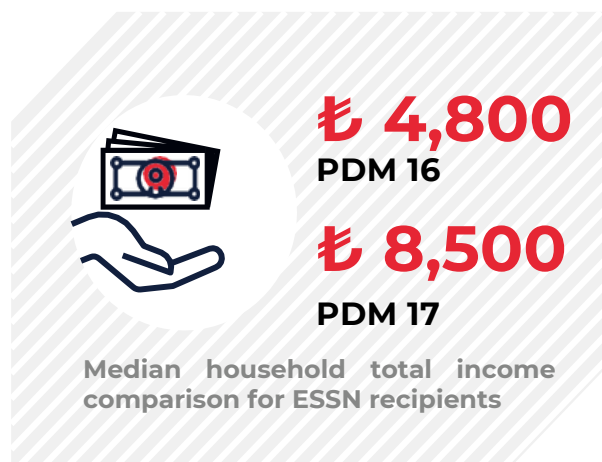
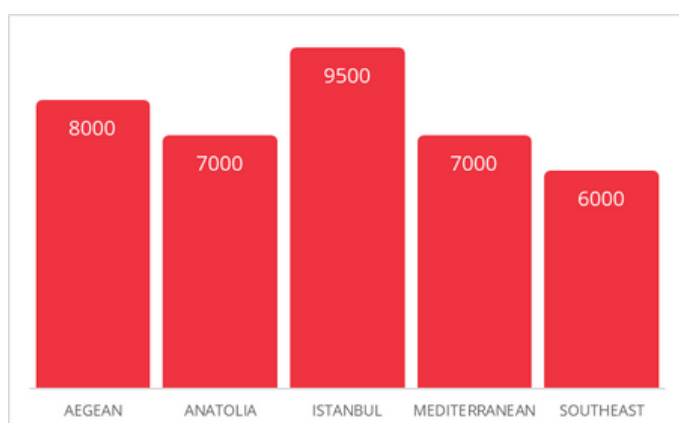


Figure 2: Median Labour Income



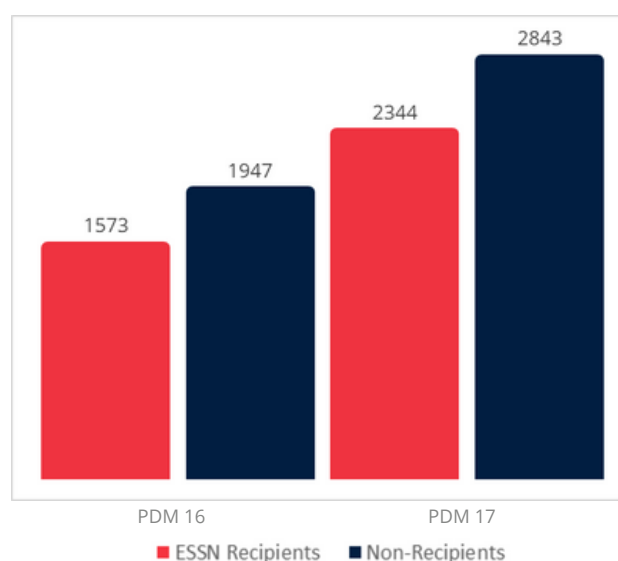
Furthermore, the south-east region has the least median labour income amount as shown in Figure 2. ESSN recipient households in the south-east region relies heavily on unskilled labour for income (65 per cent), KIZILAYKART (19 per cent), and skilled labour (13 per cent). Considering the infrastructural and economic devastation of the earthquake, findings suggest that having access to cash and cash support, along with livelihoods support provided by humanitarian actors on the field has crucial importance on the recovery period of the earthquake.

Expenditure

Similar to income, household expenditure also skyrocketed. Median household expenditure reached TRY 13,605 for ESSN recipients and TRY 13,649 for non-recipient households. Compared to Istanbul (TRY 14,948), median expenditure is significantly lower in the southeast region (TRY 11,723). High inflation rates are one of the reasons for increase in the expenditure, alongside the increase in income.

According to survey results, the largest five main expenditure items of households are food, rent, clothing, utilities, and education. Median food expenditure reached up to TRY 4,286 for both ESSN recipient and non-recipient households, having more than one-third of the total expenditure.

Figure 3: Per capita expenditure by ESSN status



Over 96 per cent of all participant households live in rentals and pay median amount of TRY 2,000 for ESSN recipients and TRY 2,500 for non-recipients as monthly rent. At the time of the study, approximately 13 per cent of earthquake-affected households were still living in tents. While 11 per cent of the non-affected individuals were sharing houses with other households, this percentage is 15 per cent among the affected households.

Findings also indicate that 59 per cent of ESSN recipient households and 57 per cent of non-recipients were above MEB, whereas the figures for PDM 16 was 72 per cent for ESSN recipients and 61 per cent for non-recipients respectively. This change can be related to methodological difference in calculation that the economic conditions for both ESSN recipients and non-recipients worsened compared to PDM 16. The survey also indicates that household expenditures increase for 93 per cent of ESSN recipient and 94 per cent of non-recipient households in winter. Energy (87 per cent), electricity (29 per cent), food (18 per cent), clothing & shoes (17 per cent) and water (10 per cent) were the expenditure items that increase in winter for most of ESSN recipient households.

Debt

Resorting to debt for survival is still prevalent among ESSN applicant households. Compared to PDM 16, the median amount of debt for those who are indebted increased from TRY 3,600 to TRY 4,800 for ESSN recipients, and from TRY 4,300 to TRY 6,000 for non-recipients. Eighty per cent of ESSN recipient households have debt according to PDM 17 analysis results, while this is 68 per cent for non-recipients.

The disaster affected the households' likelihood of being in debt. Of those who were affected by the earthquake, the percentage of indebtedness is 79 per cent while this is 74 per cent for those who were not affected. Eighty-one per cent of the former incurred new debt in the last six months compared to 76 per cent of the latter. Median amount of debt for those who were affected is TRY 5,000, which is the same as non-affected households.

Findings indicate that the majority of people buy items on loan from local markets. Another major source of debt is friends and relatives. Yet over 70 per cent of these households did not repay their debts within the month before the survey. For those who did, the median amount of debt was TRY 1,000 for ESSN recipients and TRY 1,500 for non-recipients. Thereby both ESSN and non-recipient households' ability to repay their debts still remains limited.

Figure 4: Winter expenditure increase

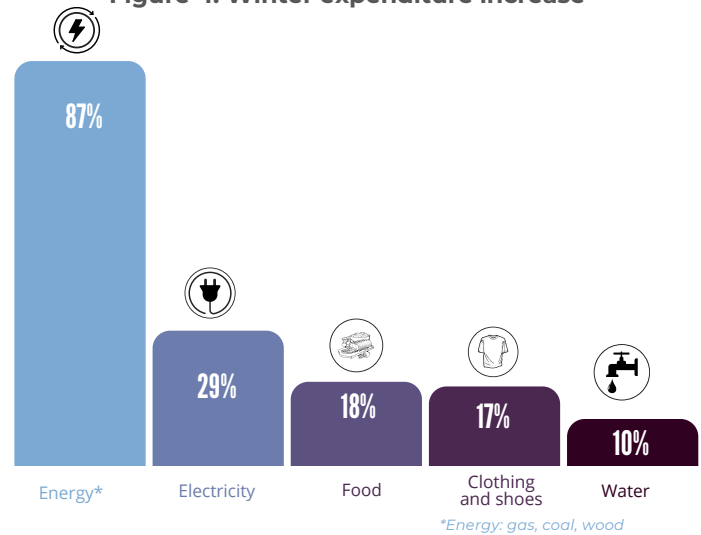
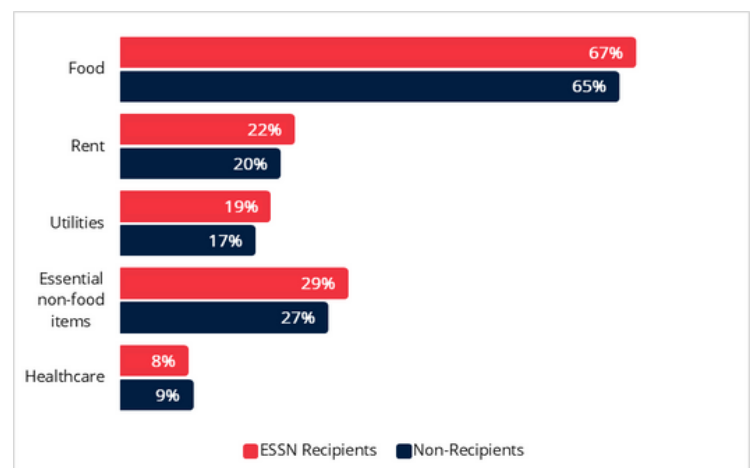


Figure 5: Debt reasons by ESSN status

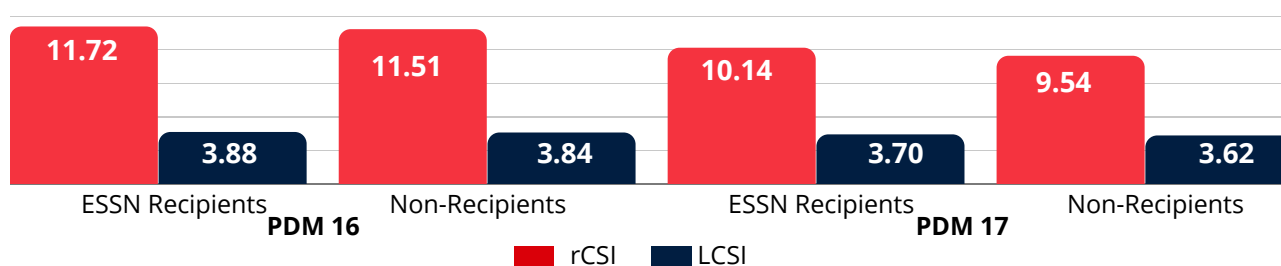


Coping Strategies

Reduced coping strategy index (RCSI)

People's reliance on a variety of negative coping strategies regarding food has decreased compared to PDM 16, the average rCSI score decreased from 11.72 to 10.14 for ESSN recipient households and from 11.52 to 9.54 for non-recipient households.⁵ Relying on less preferred/ less expensive food was the most frequently adopted coping strategy for both ESSN recipient (78 per cent) and non-recipient (77 per cent) households, hence slightly higher than PDM 16. Higher percentage of ESSN recipient households borrowed food compared to non-recipient households (18 vs. 15 per cent) and restricted adult food consumption to feed the children (39 vs. 31 per cent). In contrast, the percentage of households who reduced the number of meals eaten per day was higher among non-recipient households (38 vs. 42 per cent). Compared to non-affected households, earthquake-affected households had slightly higher rCSI scores. For those who are affected, 10.32 for ESSN recipient and 10.05 for non-recipient households while it was 10.10 and 9.45 respectively for non-affected households. This improvement can be related to food/hot meal assistance provided by Türk Kızılay, other governmental and non-governmental organizations along with seasonality, since food is more available in summer.

Figure 6: Coping strategies by ESSN status



Livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI)

Overall, the LCSI score decreased slightly compared to PDM 16 for ESSN recipient (from 3.88 to 3.70) and non-recipient (from 3.84 to 3.62) households,⁶ despite the improvement in food security indicators.

Stress coping strategies: Similar to PDM 16, the most adopted livelihood coping strategies for both ESSN recipients and non-recipient households were buying food on credit (72 per cent) and borrowing money from non-relatives to meet basic needs (44 per cent) for PDM 17. For non-recipient households, these figures were 57 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. Along with borrowing money and buying food on credit, 10 per cent of recipient households and 12 per cent of non-recipient households moved to another location, which can be related to the earthquakes. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that 15 per cent of ESSN recipient and 13 per cent of non-recipient earthquake-affected households consumed unusual types of food, which highlights the importance of Türk Kızılay's hot meal assistance in the earthquake-affected area.

Crisis coping strategies: Both ESSN recipient and non-recipient households reduced their expenditure on education (35 per cent for ESSN recipient and 24 per cent for non-recipient households) and health expenditures (27 per cent for ESSN recipient and 34 per cent for non-recipient households). In addition, 9 per cent of ESSN recipient households withdrew their children from school while this was 8 per cent for non-recipient households. Compared to PDM 16, this was 4 per cent and 2 per cent respectively.

Emergency coping strategies: The analysis revealed that involving children in income generation was the most frequently adopted emergency coping strategy (11 per cent) for ESSN recipient households, while for non-recipient households (12 per cent), it was moving the entire household to another location.

5 • There is not a statistically significant difference between ESSN recipient and non-recipient households.

6 • There is not a statistically significant difference between ESSN recipient and non-recipient households.

Food security

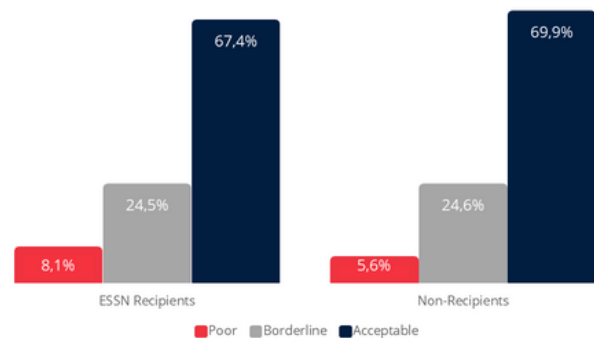
Food security⁷ is defined as “when all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life”. Food Consumption Score (FCS) was used in this study to measure participant households’ food security levels. FCS indicates that participant households’ food security levels have been on an increasing trend, ESSN recipient and non-recipient households alike.

The percentage of households who are above the acceptable food consumption score threshold increased for both ESSN recipient (59.3 per cent to 67.4 per cent) and non-recipient (61.3 per cent to 69.9 per cent)

households compared to PDM 16. This might be related to the increase in household expenditure, income, and assistance provided to earthquake-affected populations.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the south-east region had the least score for both acceptable food consumption (57.8 per cent) and mean FCS (48.6) in comparison to the other regions for PDM 16. For PDM 17, ESSN recipients in the south-east region have the highest score for acceptable food consumption (70.1) and second highest mean FCS (53.82). Additionally, analysis showed that 70.1 per cent of earthquake-affected ESSN recipients has acceptable FCS, while this is 58.8 per cent for non-recipient households. This means that along with other organization’s assistance after the earthquake, programmatic interventions of KIZILAYKART had a positive impact on the region in terms of food security.

Figure 7: Food consumption group by ESSN status



Conclusion

The outcomes of PDM 17 deliver an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic conditions of ESSN recipients and non-recipients following the catastrophic earthquakes in Türkiye’s south-east region. Several critical insights surfaced from this analysis:

1. ESSN continued to be instrumental in providing unrestricted, non-conditional financial aid to those impacted by the earthquakes. The data suggests that a considerable portion of earthquake-affected ESSN recipients retained access to finances post-disaster, underscoring the programme’s resilience and efficacy in precarity.

2. Food security indicators exhibit slight progress, possibly influenced, firstly, by seasonality in commodity prices, making food items more affordable during certain seasons. (i.e., when crops are harvested and there is a higher supply in the market, food prices usually drop, making them more accessible to consumers.). Secondly, the existence of assistance initiatives by other humanitarian entities could also be contributing to the slight progress in food security. These initiatives could range from direct food aid to programmes aimed at enhancing livelihood activities.



7 • For more detailed information, please visit: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update/what-is-food-security>

3. Household labor income depicted a noticeable increase (57 per cent for ESSN, 61 per cent for non-recipient households), despite the adversities instigated by the earthquakes and the subsequent deterioration of living costs. This rise can be attributed to seasonal agricultural employment. Nonetheless, for those directly influenced by the earthquake, income levels remain considerably lower, underlining the urgent requirement for livelihood opportunities.

4. Median household expenditure escalated, and even exceeded minimum wage in the country for both ESSN and non-recipient households, with inflation rates contributing to soaring living costs. It must be stressed that fundamental expenses such as food, rent, and utilities have endured persistent price inflations, imposing additional economic burdens on households.

5. Debt continues to be a widespread unfavourable coping mechanism among ESSN applicant households, with the median amount of debt escalating from 3,600 TRY to 4,800 TRY for ESSN recipients between PDM 16 and PDM 17. This illuminates the financial pressures confronted by these households and the necessity for ongoing support.

6. Coping strategies employed by recipients and not-recipients alike range in a wide spectrum. Stress coping methods, such as purchasing food on credit and borrowing money remain prevalent. Reductions in education and health spending, along with child school withdrawals, underscore crisis coping methods. Emergency coping mechanisms encompass income generation involving children and household relocations. Though these strategies assist families in navigating financial challenges, they also mirror the hurdles they encounter in sustaining their livelihoods.

Recommendations: To confront the challenges recognised in this study, it is vital to emphasize livelihood support for populations impacted by the earthquake. The role of assistance initiatives, consisting of ESSN and other organizations, remains crucial in mitigating individuals' necessities, ensuring accessibility to primary essentials, and facilitating economic recuperation. Additionally, continuous observation and targeted interventions can further ameliorate the economic circumstances and food security of affected households.



TÜRK KIZILAY (TURKISH RED CRESCENT)

The largest humanitarian organization in Türkiye

Türk Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent) is the largest humanitarian organization in Türkiye, helping vulnerable people in and out of disasters for years, both in the country and abroad. Millions of people currently receive support through our programmes in cooperation with the Government of Türkiye. We are supporting vulnerable people impacted by disasters and other groups in need of humanitarian assistance.



THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES (IFRC)

The world's largest humanitarian network

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, reaching 150 million people in 192 National Societies, including Türk Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent), through 13.7 million volunteers. Together, we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people.



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