

SUMMARY: INTERSECTORAL VULNERABILITY SURVEY

Conducted under the EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET (ESSN)



COVID-19: INCREASED VULNERABILITY AMONG REFUGEES¹ IN TURKEY

Turkey hosts almost 4 million refugees who were vulnerable already before the onset of COVID-19 and who were hit hard by the deteriorating socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) have conducted a large-scale survey to better understand the vulnerabilities and challenges faced.

A large-scale remote survey was conducted by the TRC's Kizilaykart Cash Based Assistance Programme Coordinatorship and IFRC under the EU-funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) to better understand the severity of humanitarian conditions across different refugee groups² in Turkey; identify further information needs and help improve the ESSN programme and accountability to the refugee population.

The research has found that the socio-economic situation

1 • Refugee is referring to foreigners who are under international protection or temporary protection according to the Law on Foreigners and International Protection. Herein the term is used to refer to their legal status.

2 • Households receiving cash assistance are identified as "eligible" while those not receiving support are "ineligible"

brought on by COVID-19 has significantly eroded the ability of refugees to meet their basic needs. Cash assistance through ESSN is providing refugees with an important financial buffer compared to ones who do not receive assistance; however, the economic pressures have affected everyone significantly. Their resources and coping strategies have been exhausted, debt levels are rising, and if restrictions continue, the needs of refugees could increase dramatically. Although ESSN supports the most vulnerable households, the needs among refugees not receiving ESSN is growing and could soon equal the proportion of those ESSN targets.



CASH ASSISTANCE
through ESSN is providing refugees with an important financial buffer



THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE IN NEED COULD INCREASE SHARPLY in the coming months if COVID-19 restrictions continue



Funded by the European Union



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Kizilaykart

platform.kizilaykart.org

twitter.com/kizilaykart

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IFRC

media.ifrc.org/ifrc/essn

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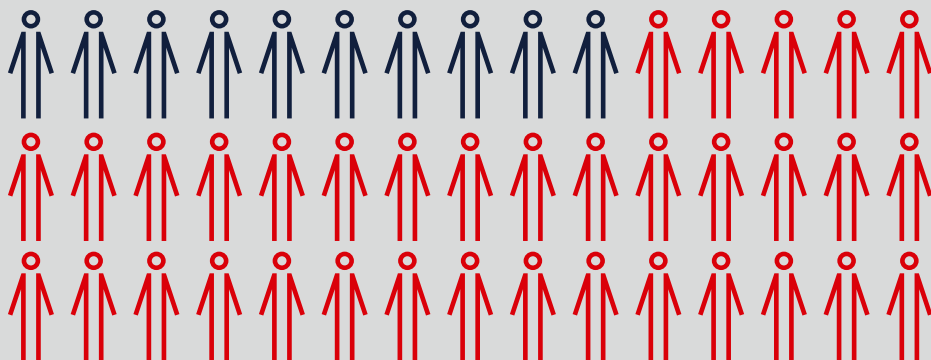
youtube.com/user/ifrc

facebook.com/IFRC

Between August 2020 - February 2021, we surveyed:

4,500+ HOUSEHOLDS

through phone surveys, including people receiving ESSN and those who are not.



 **76%**
male headed households

 **24%**
female headed households



97%
were Syrian
and Iraqi refugees

FINDING 1:

SHARP INCREASE IN DEBT AND UNEMPLOYMENT DUE TO COVID-19

In addition to cash assistance (for eligible households only), the main sources of income for most refugees surveyed is from unskilled or semi-skilled labour, working in the sectors of construction, manufacturing, food, agriculture and hospitality. With COVID-19 restrictions, these income sources have been severely impacted. This has sent debt levels to skyrocket.

The percentage of households in which at least one adult male/female has worked at least one day during the last 30 days²



2 • The secondary data gathered for IVS indicates that more than 95% of refugees work informally in Turkey (KAS 2019, ILO, 2019).



50%
increase in debt compared to
pre-pandemic period of COVID-19



67%
have bought food on credit
at least once in last 30 days



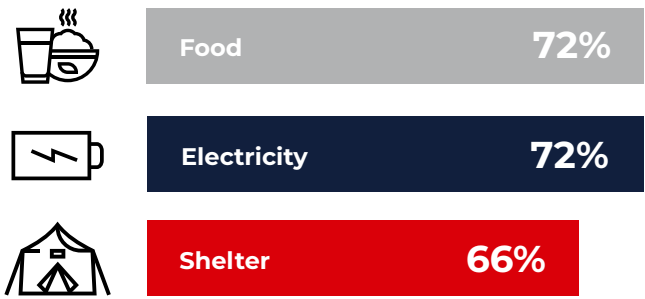
64%
are borrowing
money to cope

FINDING 2:

FAMILIES ARE STRUGGLING TO AFFORD ESSENTIAL ITEMS, LIKE FOOD, HOUSING AND ENERGY

Food, housing and energy are considered the top priority needs by those surveyed and account for 74% of the total monthly expenses. To cover these costs, families have to sacrifice other important expenses, including education, communication and health-related costs.

Essential needs that families are struggling to afford (% of households):



59% said they can rarely afford basic needs, like food, shelter, water and sanitation.



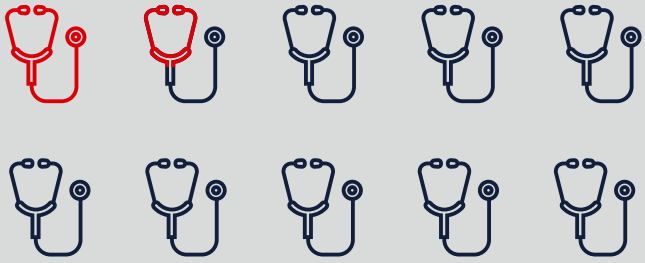
38% have at least one child not attending the online school curriculum

FINDING 3:

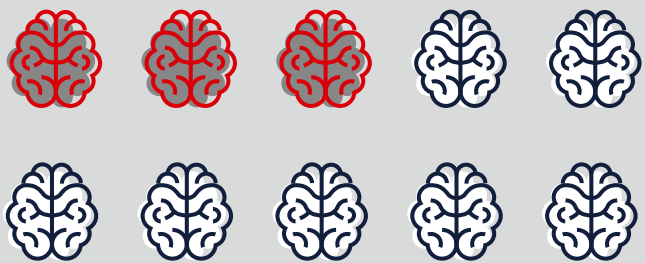
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH HAS DETERIORATED

Common health issues are reported by half the households interviewed, suggesting that families are delaying visit to the doctor for economic reasons or fear of COVID-19 infections.

15% said their general physical and mental well-being conditions have seriously deteriorated and require immediate medical attention



32% of the households reported signs of psychological distress, more frequently for ineligible adults and eligible children

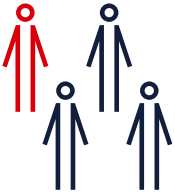


FINDING 4:


CASH ASSISTANCE HAS PROVIDED REFUGEES WITH AN IMPORTANT FINANCIAL BUFFER, BUT NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES STILL EXIST FOR ALL REFUGEES

ESSN is supporting 1.8 million refugees in Turkey. Millions of refugees have benefitted from monthly cash assistance to help them pay for the things they need most. While this is providing a critical financial buffer to cover the things they need most, the current economic situation in Turkey

coupled with a global pandemic puts a massive burden on refugees' shoulders. Families are sacrificing other important expenses, mainly education, communication and health-related costs to cover their most basic things they need.

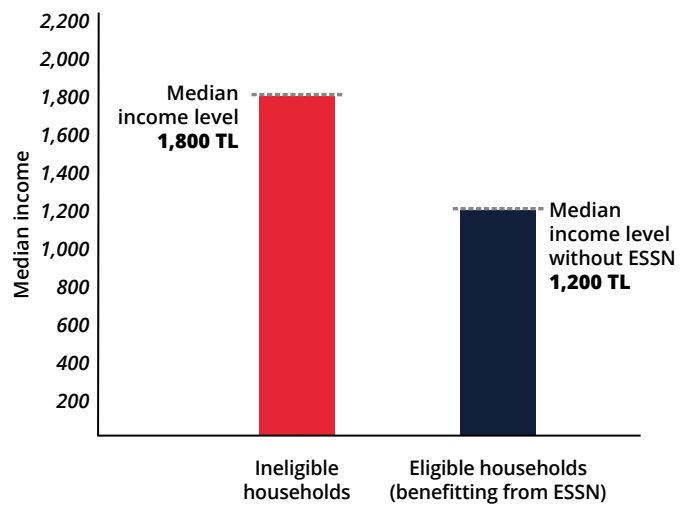


1 in 4 said they have exhausted nearly all their resources. Most of people cope by buying food on credit, borrowing money and reducing other essential items.



79% said they are reducing their number of meals and portion sizes as well as buying cheaper less-desired food

ESSN is providing a critical financial buffer



(Transfer value has been increased to 155 TL since March 2021)

Without enough money to afford basic needs, households have been forced to cope in the following ways:

