



Photo: Nouredine Bakour

DEEPENING POVERTY AND DEBT:

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS FOR REFUGEES IN TURKEY ONE YEAR ON FROM COVID-19

**FINDINGS FROM THE EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET
POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING SURVEY (ROUND 12) IN TURKEY**



Funded by
the European Union



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCTE	- - - -	Conditional Cash Transfer for Education
CPI	- - - -	Consumer Price Index
COVID-19	-	Coronavirus Disease 2019
ESSN	- - - -	Emergency Social Safety Net
ECHO	- - - -	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FCS	- - - -	Food Consumption Score
GDP	- - - -	Gross Domestic Product
IFRC	- - - -	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	- - - -	International Labour Organisation
IVS	- - - -	Intersectoral Vulnerability Survey
LCSI	- - - -	Livelihood Coping Strategy Index
MEB	- - - -	Minimum Expenditure Basket
MOFSS	- - -	Ministry of Family and Social Services
OECD	- - - -	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDM	- - - -	Post Distribution Monitoring
RCSI	- - - -	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
TRC	- - - -	Turkish Red Crescent
TRY	- - - -	Turkish Lira
TURKSTAT		Turkish Statistical Institute

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THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE 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 Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılay), through the work of 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.



TURKISH RED CRESCENT (KIZILAY)

The largest humanitarian organization in Turkey

The Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılay) is the largest humanitarian organization in Turkey, to help 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 Turkey. We are supporting vulnerable people impacted by disasters and other groups in need of humanitarian assistance.



BACKGROUND

More than one year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Turkey is in the process of recovering. The aftershocks of this pandemic will be felt for years to come, with existing vulnerabilities only compounding.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 21.7 per cent in the second quarter (Q-II) of 2021 after a decrease of 9.9 per cent¹ recorded a year earlier, coupled with a 3 per cent increase in the employment rate between July 2020 and July 2021².

However, the cost of living increased over this period. The annual increase in consumer price index (CPI) was around 19 per cent as of August 2021.³ A recent study by IGAM provided evidence that asymmetric labour market effects of the pandemic impacted various groups within Turkey in different ways. As government support packages mainly prioritized protection of the formally employed⁴, refugees who are known to engage more in informal sector⁵ and in lower skilled jobs⁶. Accordingly, refugees may not have necessarily benefited from the economic upturn.

The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme provides monthly unrestricted and unconditional cash assistance to over 1.5 million vulnerable refugees, to support them meet their basic needs and indirectly assists them cope with the negative economic consequences of COVID-19. As of April 2021, the programme increased the transfer value from 120 to 155 TRY per person.

The programme conducts regular Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys to understand the impact of the cash assistance on households receiving the assistance and track socio-economic indicators such as debt, income, and coping strategies for a representative sample of ESSN applicant households over time. Conducted as the 12th in the series between May to September 2021, this PDM survey adopted a longitudinal research design, targeting the sample of the 10th PDM survey conducted a year earlier. The sample included a total of 3,208 households, inclusive of 1,879 ESSN recipient and 1,329 non-recipient households with 62 per cent response rate. To increase the accuracy of the trend analysis in this study, only the households that responded to both PDM 12 and PDM 10 were included.



1 • Nevzat Devranoglu and Daren Butler. (2021). "Turkey's economy sees powerful Q2 rebound after last year's slump." Reuters.1 September. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-economy-surges-217-q2-after-last-years-slump-2021-09-01/>

2 • Turkish Statistical Institute (2021) Labour Force Statistics, July 2021

3 • Ministry of Treasure and Finance (2021) Update on Turkish Economy, August 2021.

4 • M. Murat Erdoğan Kemal Kirişçi Gökçe Uysal. (2021). "The World Refugee & Migration Council Research Report. Improving Syrian Refugee Inclusion in the Turkish Economy How Can the International Community Help?" September.

5 • Atlantic Council and UNDP. (2020). "Turkey's Refugee Resilience: Expanding and Improving Solutions for the Economic Inclusion of Syrians in Turkey."

6 • ILO. (2020). "Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labor Market."

KEY FINDINGS:

PDM 12 reveals how ESSN applicants adjusted to the socio-economic challenges in the past year, compared with the situation one year ago (June to September 2020). The findings from this study indicate a deterioration of the socio-economic situation (increasing debt levels, decreasing food consumption, frequent adoption of negative coping strategies) despite improvements in income, households still struggle to meet their basic needs.

Key findings of a comparative analysis between PDM 10 and PDM 12 survey findings are given below:



33% increase in income

During lockdowns, ESSN functioned as the primary income source for recipient households (PDM10). After the lift of the lockdowns, ESSN became a secondary source as the recipient group relied more on the unskilled labour.

As a result, ESSN applicants' median total income increased by 33 per cent between PDM 10 and PDM 12 from 1,500 TRY to 2,000 TRY. While this meant a *55 per cent increase for recipients, it was 22 percent for non-recipients.*



The increase in income did not compensate for the increased cost of living

Increases in income did not compensate for the increases in expenditure, 88 per cent of ESSN applicant households were shown to have a level of income (excluding ESSN and CCTE) below total expenditure. Higher percentage of ESSN applicants had expenditure above Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), which strongly suggests that they were leaning towards additional sources of income or resorting to debt.



Debt levels continue to deepen

80 per cent of ESSN applicant households adopted debt as a coping strategy and majority of these households acquired new debt 3 month prior to the data collection.

Since PDM 10, median debt amount remained same for recipient households at 2,000 TRY while for non-recipients, it increased by 36 per cent to 3,000 TRY.



Increase in adoption of negative coping strategies

Food security is an issue of concern for ESSN applicants, as indicated by high rCSI scores. Average rCSI score worsened for ESSN recipients while it slightly improved for non-recipients, most adopted strategy being consumption of less preferred and cheaper food.

ESSN applicants have high LCSIs scores, an indication of reduction in longer term household coping and productive capacities. This deteriorated for ESSN recipients between PDM 10 and PDM 12.



20% decrease in households with acceptable food consumption scores

There is a drastic decrease in percentage of ESSN recipients with acceptable food consumption score from 76 per cent to 56 per cent.



Learning continued despite COVID-19 pandemic

In over 70 per cent of the ESSN applicant households, all school-aged children could follow online/remote curriculum. EBA online is the main service used to access education.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the PDM survey is to assess the impact of ESSN assistance on the socio-economic conditions of recipient households with particular focus on their level of income, expenditure, debt, coping strategies and food security. The surveys also aim to track changes over time and compare ESSN recipient households' circumstances with those of non-recipient households.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1** To measure the extent to which the minimum expenditure basket is met
- 2** To understand the trends in income, expenditure debt, and coping strategies over time
- 3** To determine the severity of coping strategies applied by households in case of experiencing economic /financial difficulties
- 4** To assess the extent to which food consumption habits are secure

CHAPTER 2: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

PDM 12 survey adopted a longitudinal research design, which is usually preferred when the objective is to understand the change of an outcome or variables over a period of time. It involves repeated observations of the same respondents over short or long periods of time⁷.

7 • Sileyew, Kassu Jilcha. "Research design and methodology." In Cyberspace. IntechOpen, 2019.

SAMPLE

For PDM 12, sample sizes for ESSN recipient and non-recipient households were selected according to the sampling strategy of the PDM 10 from a year ago, which was calculated with a 95 per cent confidence level and 5 per cent margin of error. To accommodate non-responses during the data collection, PDM 10 sample size was adjusted to ensure same households were included in this study for the purpose of comparison over a one-year period. The sample size for PDM10 was 5,148 households out of which 3,208 (1,879 eligible and 1,329 ineligible) households responded to PDM 12 study translating to 62 per cent response rate.

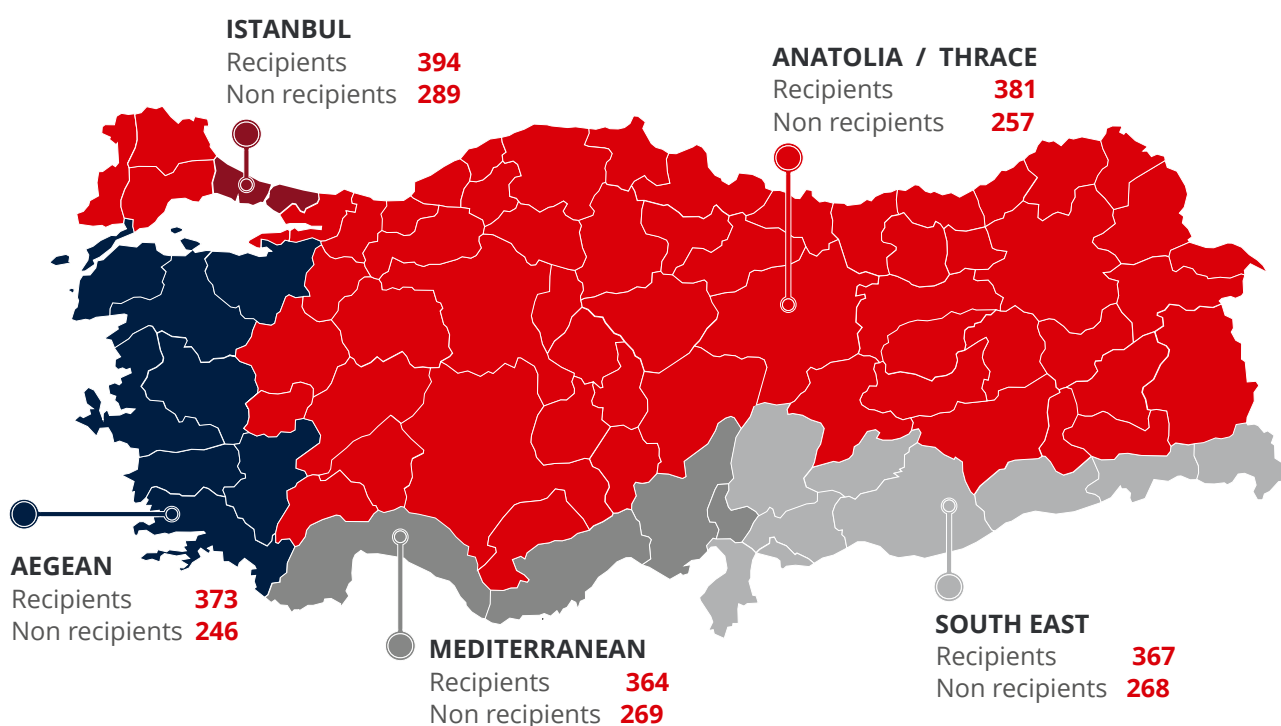
Table 1: PDM sample information

Name	Sample Size	Data collection period
PDM 10 (adjusted)	3208	June - September 2020
PDM 12	3208	May - September 2021

AREA OF STUDY

The ESSN is a nationwide programme with recipients spread across the different regions with diverse socio-economic conditions, with 70 per cent of the ESSN applicants being concentrated in 10 provinces. For a better estimation of study parameters, a regional stratification based on the proportion of applicant households was applied. Black Sea, Eastern Anatolia, Central Anatolia, and Thrace Regions were combined as one stratum based on the similarities in the programme application figures and relatively similar socio-economic dynamics. Besides, Istanbul, the main commercial city of Turkey, was treated as a stratum in itself because of its distinct socio-economic status⁸. Independent random samples were drawn from these five regions and eligibility to ESSN as per Figure 1.

Figure 1: Map of the study area



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

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT



ESSN applicants' median total income increased by 33 % between PDM 10 and PDM 12 from 1,500 TRY to 2,000 TRY.

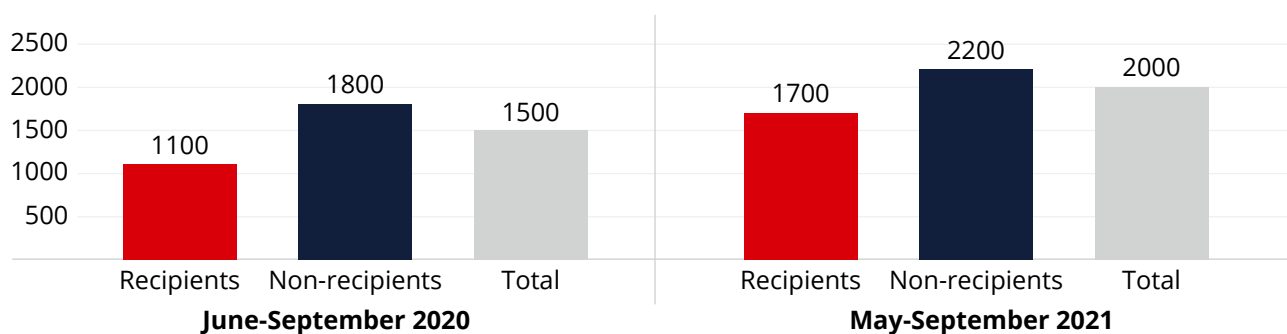
Unskilled labour is the main source of income for both ESSN recipient and non-recipient households. Reliance on ESSN assistance as the main income source decreased from 46 to 24 per cent between PDM10 and PDM12.

Median household income increased for ESSN applicants by 33 per cent

Compared to PDM 10, the median household income (excluding ESSN and CCTE) increased by 55 % for ESSN recipients and 22 % for non-recipients, which might be related to the increase in percentage of households whose main income source is unskilled labour. For the total sample combining the ESSN recipients and non-recipients the income increased by 33 %⁹. The increase in the median incomes (600 TRY for ESSN recipient and 400 TRY for non-recipient households) could be attributed to the reduction of strict COVID-19 measures, and the associated increase in the availability of irregular, informal work (which is main source of income for majority of refugees) during PDM 12 data collection period^{10 11}.

Share of households with at least one working member within the 30 days prior to data collection raised from 87 to 91 %, even though type of work in terms of formality and regularity was not declared during the study. As the number of individuals working in a household increase, the household income (excluding ESSN and CCTE assistance) also increased.¹²

Figure 2: Median household monthly income (excluding ESSN and CCTE) based on ESSN status



9 • Wilcoxon signed rank sum test was utilized to see whether there is any statistically significant difference between matched samples. Median of household's total income shows a statistically significant difference between PDM10 and PDM1

10 • Atlantic Council and UNDP. (2020). "Turkey's Refugee Resilience: Expanding and Improving Solutions for the Economic Inclusion of Syrians in Turkey."

11 • ILO. (2020). "Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labor Market."

12 • Spearman Correlation test were utilized to see relationship between variables of total income and number of working individuals in the households. As a result of this test, there is moderate relationship (correlation coefficient is around 0.46) between the variables of total income and number of working individuals in the household

While around 10 per cent of the ESSN recipient households had a member who generated income in-kind, this was about 7 per cent of among non-recipient households. These findings are consistent with those of PDM 10 (9 per cent for ESSN recipient and 7 per cent for non-recipient households). Hence, it is possible to state that despite changes in the employment sector during the pandemic, there is no impactful change in terms of type of income earned by the ESSN applicants.

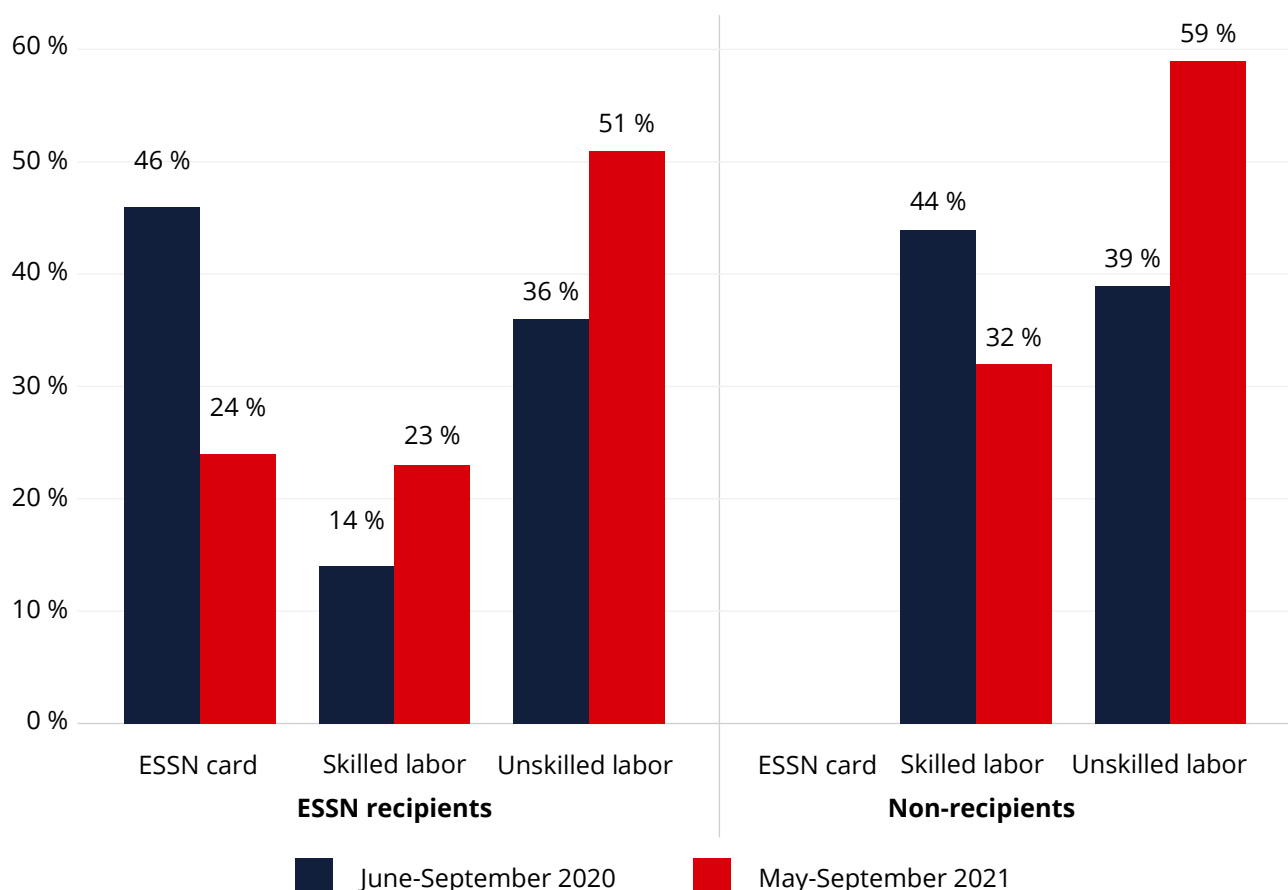
Unskilled labour becomes the primary source of income for ESSN applicant households

As the strict lockdown measures were lifted, access to labour opportunities increased. PDM 12 results therefore show an increase in percentage of households that mainly rely on unskilled labour as a main source of income, and it became the primary source of income for both ESSN recipient (51 per cent) and non-recipient (59 per cent) households. Reliance on ESSN card as main source of income decreased from 46 per cent to 24 per cent among ESSN recipient households where 70 per cent considered the assistance as a secondary income.

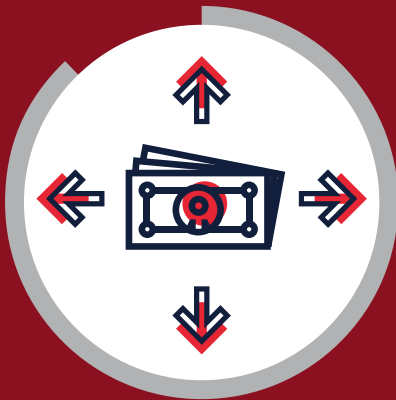
During lockdowns, ESSN played a critical role in terms of absorbing impact of reduced income on the recipients. One of the main objectives of the ESSN programme is to make its target group more resilient and reduce their vulnerability, and these findings indicate that the programme successfully served its main purpose.

As for reliance on skilled labour as the main source of income, percentage of non-recipient households decreased to 32 per cent, while it increased to 23 per cent for ESSN recipients. Credit, on the other hand, is another source of income for ESSN applicants; secondary income for non-recipient households (52 per cent), and tertiary income for 56 per cent of the ESSN recipient households.

Figure 3: Main sources of income



EXPENDITURE



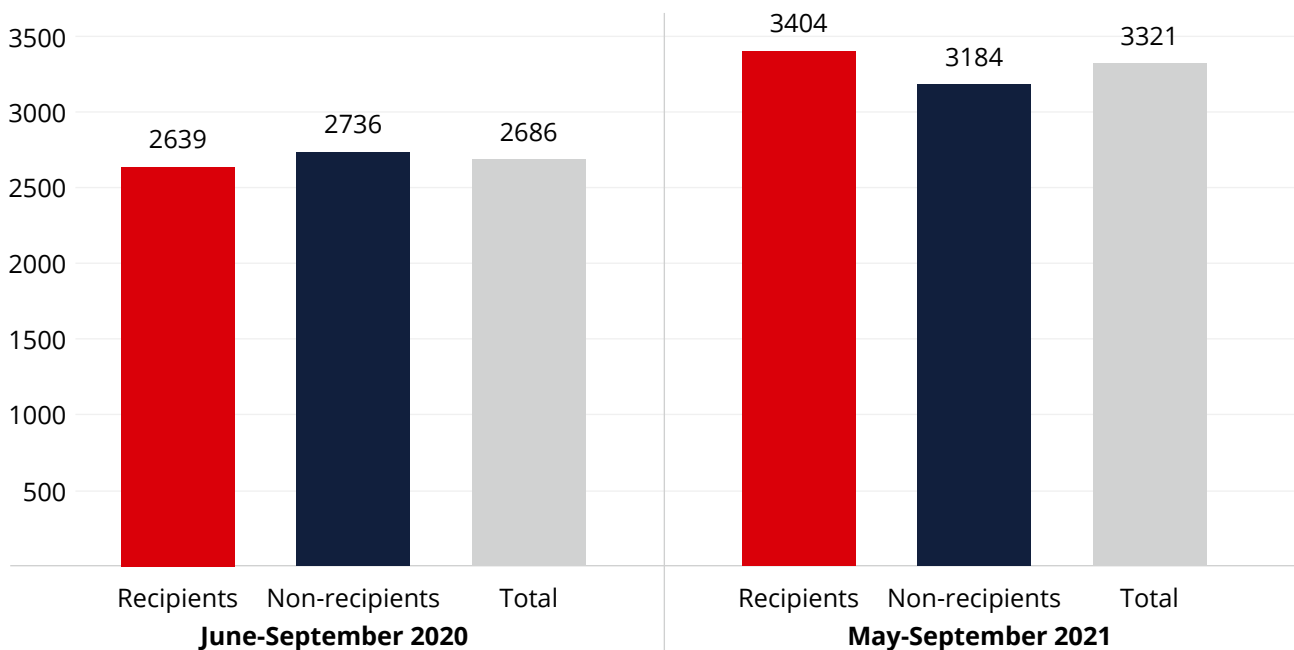
Increases in income did not cover increases in expenditure, with 88% of ESN applicant households reporting income (excluding ESN and CCTE) below total expenditure.

More than 70 per cent of ESN applicants had expenditure above MEB, which could be explained through additional income sources or new debt.

ESN applicants' median monthly expenditure increased by 24 per cent

Between PDM 10 and PDM 12, median expenditure for all ESN applicants increased by 24 per cent from approximately 2,700 TRY to 3,300 TRY. The increase was larger, at 29 per cent, for recipient households (765 TRY) and 16 per cent for non-recipient households (448 TRY) which might be related to increase in income of the former.¹³ However, considering that percentage change in the CPI since August 2020, ie. inflation rate, was 19.25 per cent¹⁴, increase in total expenditure of the households should not be regarded as an improvement in purchasing power.

Figure 4: Median total expenditure (in TRY)



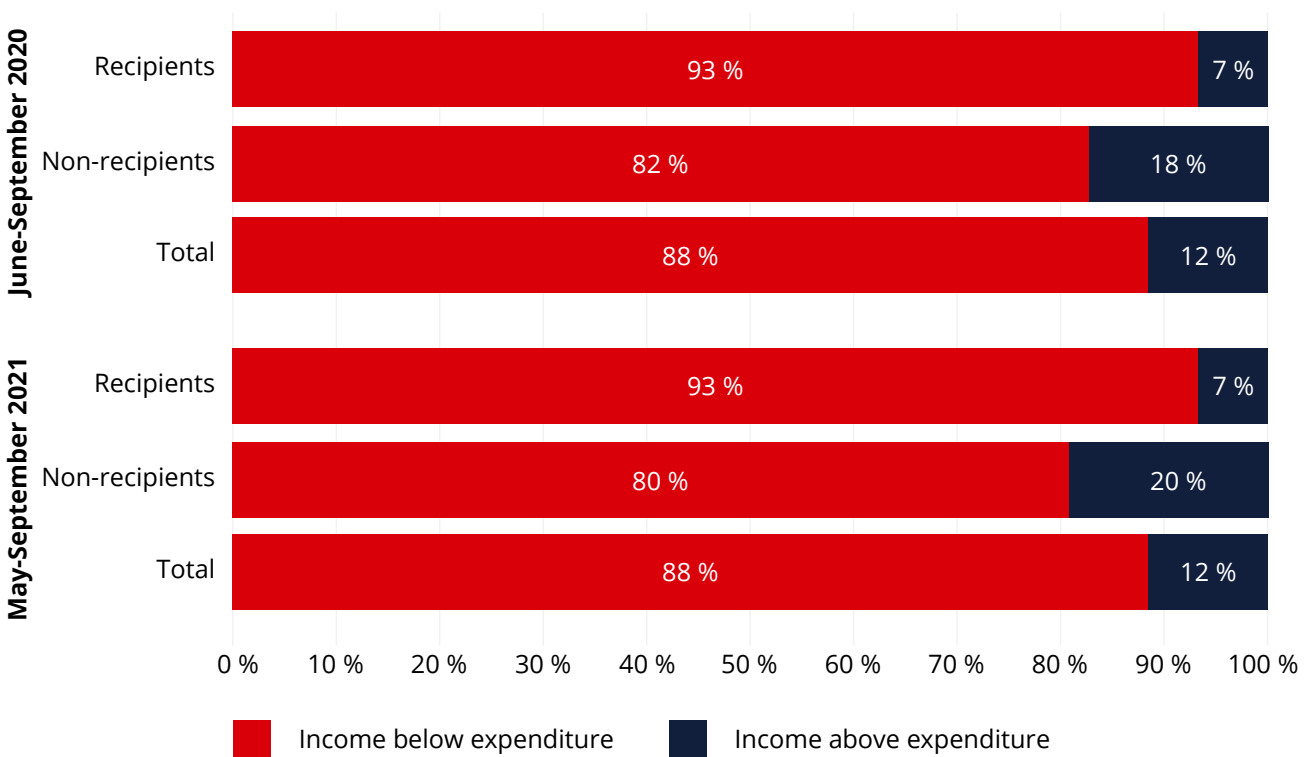
13 • Spearman Correlation test were utilized to see relationship of total income and total expenditure of households between matched samples. As a result of this test, there is statistically significant relationship between the variables of total income and total expenditure of both recipient and non-recipient households

14 • TurkStat, 2021. "Tüketici Fiyat Endeksi, Ağustos 2021" <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Tuketici-Fiyat-Endeksi-Agustos-2021-37386>

Increase in income did not compensate for the increase in expenditure, with 88 per cent of ESSN applicant households reporting income (excluding ESSN and CCTE) below total expenditure, same as PDM 10. About 93 per cent of ESSN recipient and 80 per cent of the non-recipient households do not earn enough to cover their monthly expenditure. Further analysis reveals that 78 per cent of the recipient households with their incomes being lower than expenditures had acquired new debts 3 months prior to the data collection period. This could indicate that the gap in the ESSN recipient households' budget had been covered by debt.



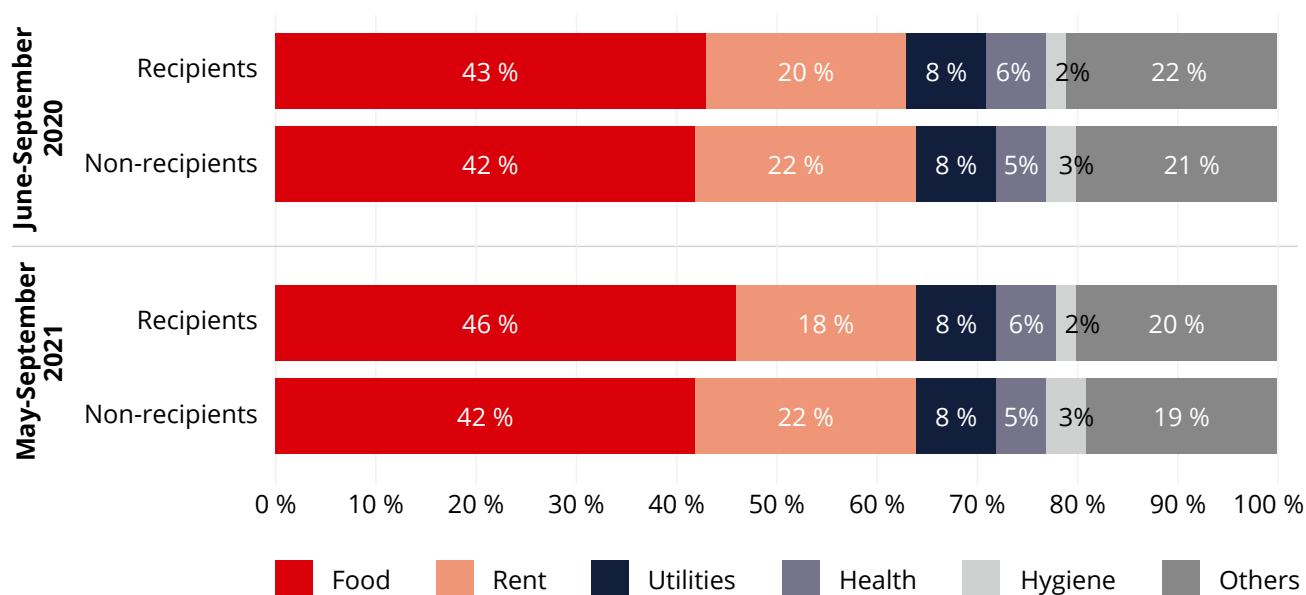
Figure 5: Households' total monthly (excluding ESSN and CCTE) income and expenditure



The expenditure patterns of participant households did not change between PDM 10 and 12. According to both surveys, the largest expenditure items of households are food, rent and utilities, followed by hygiene, water and communication. On the other hand, most of the participant households did not spend on celebrations, clothing, or sending money as remittances.

“Debt has become mandatory due to this corona virus. A year ago, Kızılaykart was able to both pay our rent and cover some of our expenses. Now, it only pays some of my rent.”
 – Male, ESSN recipient, Samsun

Figure 6: Share of expenditure components among household total expenditure



Increase in the median amount of expenditure on food, the largest expenditure item, was around 40 per cent (from 1071.4 TRY to 1500 TRY) for ESSN recipients and 7 per cent increase for non-recipients (from 1200 TRY to 1285.7 TRY).¹⁵ Different household size for recipient (6.39) and non-recipient (5.15) households should be taken into consideration when evaluating increase in food expenditures. Furthermore, TurkStat presents supportive data in terms of change in the food prices, for August 2021, Turkey's annual inflation rate on food items was 29.82 per cent.¹⁶ Moreover, despite the increase in food expenditure, this was not reflected to consumption behavior of households considering the increase in expenses on food costs on the households' expenditure budget.

Minimum expenditure basket

The Minimum expenditure basket (MEB) is the calculated monthly cost of basic needs for a household of six members. It is calculated and adjusted based on estimations of the essential goods and services required to ensure a household's food component provides basic nutritional requirements in line with Sphere standards.¹⁷ To assess relative poverty at household level, per capita value of MEB is compared with the household per capita expenditure. If the household per capita expenditure is below the per capita MEB, then the household is considered to fall below the reference line. In this study, calculation of the per capita expenditure, relied on the square root scale.¹⁸ Between August 2020 and August 2021, MEB value for a 6-person refugee household increased from 2454 TRY to 2816 TRY. There was a price increase in all categories, for food percentage increase was approximately 20 per cent), while the increase was around 11 per cent for rent and 22 per cent for utilities.

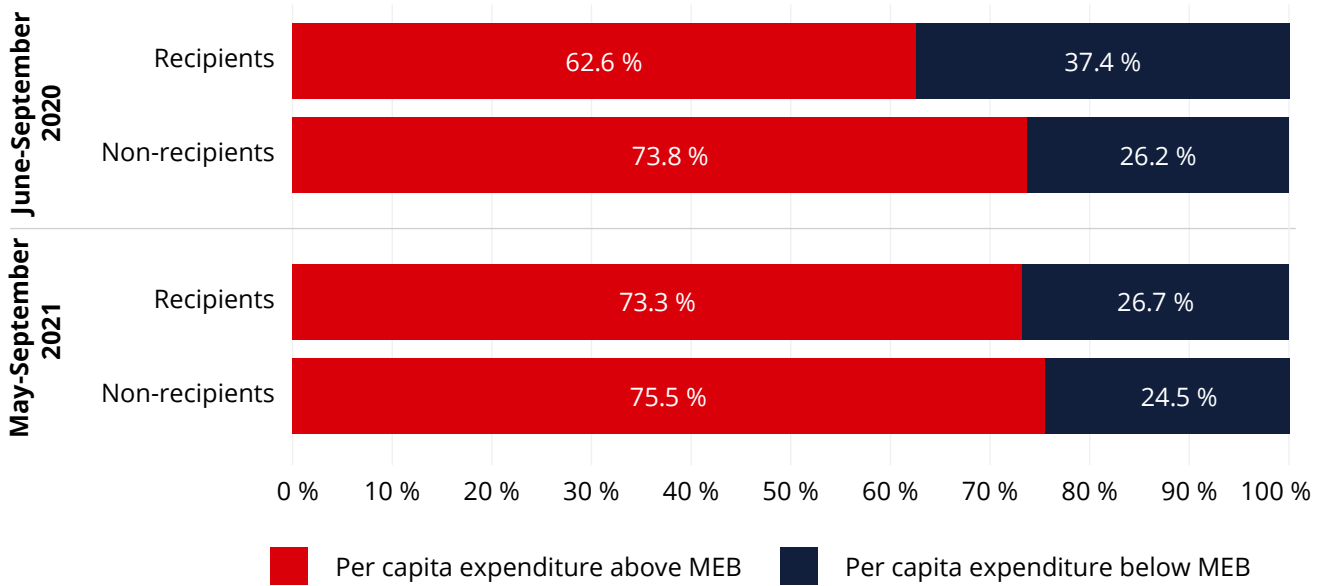
15 • Wilcoxon signed rank sum test was utilized to see whether there is any statistically significant difference between matched samples. Median of household's food expenditure shows a statistically significant difference **in both recipient and non-recipient households** between PDM10 and PDM12.

16 • TurkStat.2021. Consumer Price Index (2003=199), Food. <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn=84&locale=en>

17 • Sphere standards intend to ensure quality humanitarian response and accountability. MEB is estimated as the cost of acquiring enough food to meet energy requirements, usually 2,100 calories per person per day, as per the Sphere Standard. For more information please visit <https://spherestandards.org/humanitarian-standards/core-humanitarian-standard/>

18 • Square root scale (The equivalence scale) used in the OECD Income Distribution Database divides household income by the square root of the household size. This implies that, for instance, a household of four persons has needs twice as large as one composed of a single person.

Figure 7: Households with per capita expenditure above/below MEB



According to PDM 12, the majority of both ESSN recipient (73.3 per cent) and non-recipient (75.5 per cent) households had per capita expenditure levels above MEB. Percentage of ESSN recipient households with per capita expenditure above MEB value grew from 62.6 to 73.3 per cent, while there was a slight increase for non-recipient households from 73.8 per cent to 75.5 per cent. Findings also show that, most households with per capita expenditure above per capita MEB relied on new debt, 78 per cent of the ESSN recipients and 67 per cent of the non-recipients reported acquiring a new debt 3 months prior to data collection period, which implies that even though majority of the households had expenditure above MEB, this was made possible through debt. In addition, once the amount of additional assistance needed was asked to ESSN recipient households, the median amount was 1000 TRY in both PDM 10 and PDM 12.



DEBT



Median debt remained the same for households receiving cash assistance but increased by 36% for those not receiving cash assistance

ESSN applicants who were in debt owe higher amounts of money compared to PDM 10.

Over 80 % of the ESSN applicant households have debt

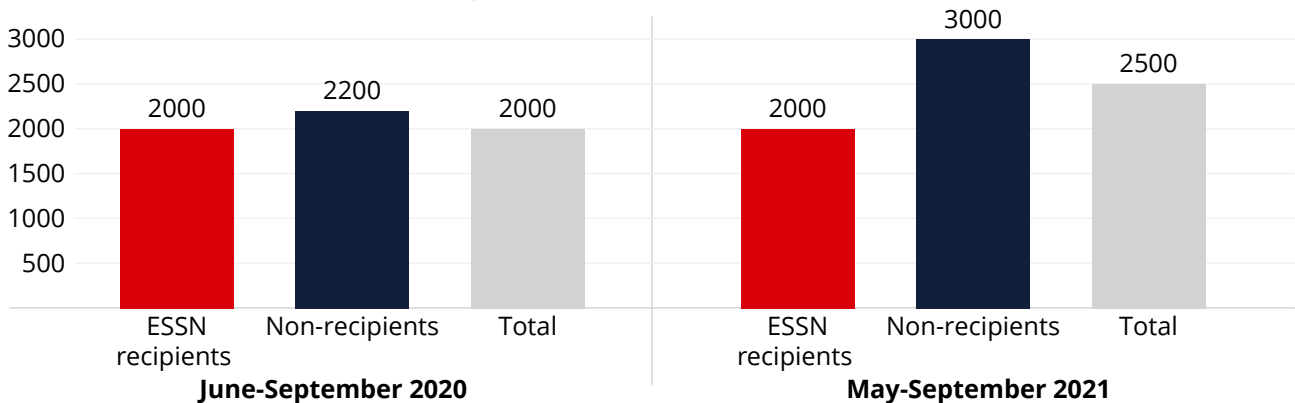
Between PDM 10 to PDM 12, the share of ESSN applicant households who are in debt did not change.¹⁹ While 84 per cent of the ESSN recipient households are in debt, the proportion is 80 per cent among non-recipients for PDM 12.²⁰ Moreover, 77 per cent of the ESSN recipients and 67 per cent of non-recipients incurred new debt 3 months before of data collection to cover their basic needs.

The median debt increased for ESSN applicants while debt repayment remains low for all

ESSN applicant households owe higher amounts of debt compared to PDM 10 with median amount increased from 2,000 TRY to 2,500 TRY (by 25 %), and they struggle to manage their finances. While amount of debt remained the same for recipient households, it increased by 36 % for non-recipients. For both groups, median amount of debt was higher than their median income. The median debt was significantly higher for non-recipient households than it is for recipients.²¹

These figures all highlight the continuing precarious financial situation of ESSN applicant households, as reflected elsewhere in this study.

Figure 8: Amount of total debt



19 • McNemar's Chi-squared test was utilized to see whether there is any statistically significant difference between matched samples. Test result shows that there is no statistically significant association between PDM10 and PDM12 in terms of households being in debt

20 • Chi-square test was applied to determine whether the association between two variables is statistically significant. Test result shows that there is an association between recipient and non-recipient households in terms of being in debt in PDM12.

21 • Mood's median test was conducted to measure whether there is any statistically significant difference between ESSN recipient and non-recipient households in terms of their total debt. It was found that the difference between ESSN recipient and non-recipient households is statistically significant

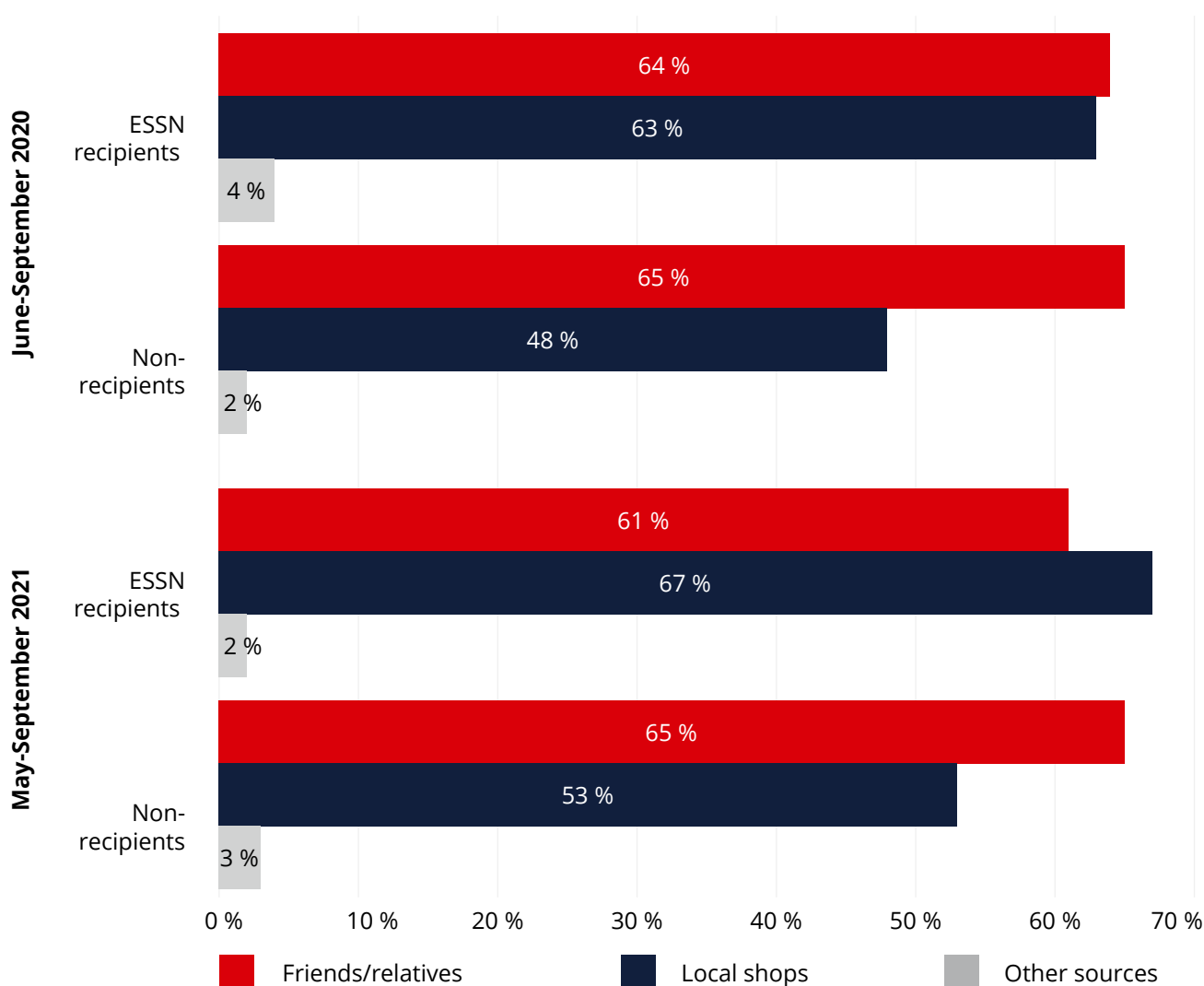
Only 16 per cent of ESSN applicant households were able to repay their debts. While 66 per cent of the ESSN recipients did not do any repayment in last 30 days, this was 82 per cent among non-recipients according to PDM 12 results. Among those who could pay back, median amount was approximately 400 TRY for both recipients and non-recipients, an amount much smaller than what they owe. This finding is also supported by the focus group discussions on the same topic. Participants shared that households borrowed multiple times and in small amounts from more than one lender and they pay back in instalment as they receive an income. This indicates that families are often in a vicious cycle of being in debt without the ability to pay it off completely.

“
We told the landlord that we would pay for three months’ rent when we could work, then I worked and paid in instalments. We live and we pay as we go.
 – Male, ESSN recipient, Ankara

Households mostly borrow from friends or relatives and local shops

Friends or relatives, as well local shops are still the main sources of debt for ESSN applicants. Reliance on debt to local shops increased from PDM 10 to PDM 12, especially for non-recipients. Perhaps households had reached to a natural limit in terms of borrowing from friends or relatives and hence needed to turn to other alternatives.

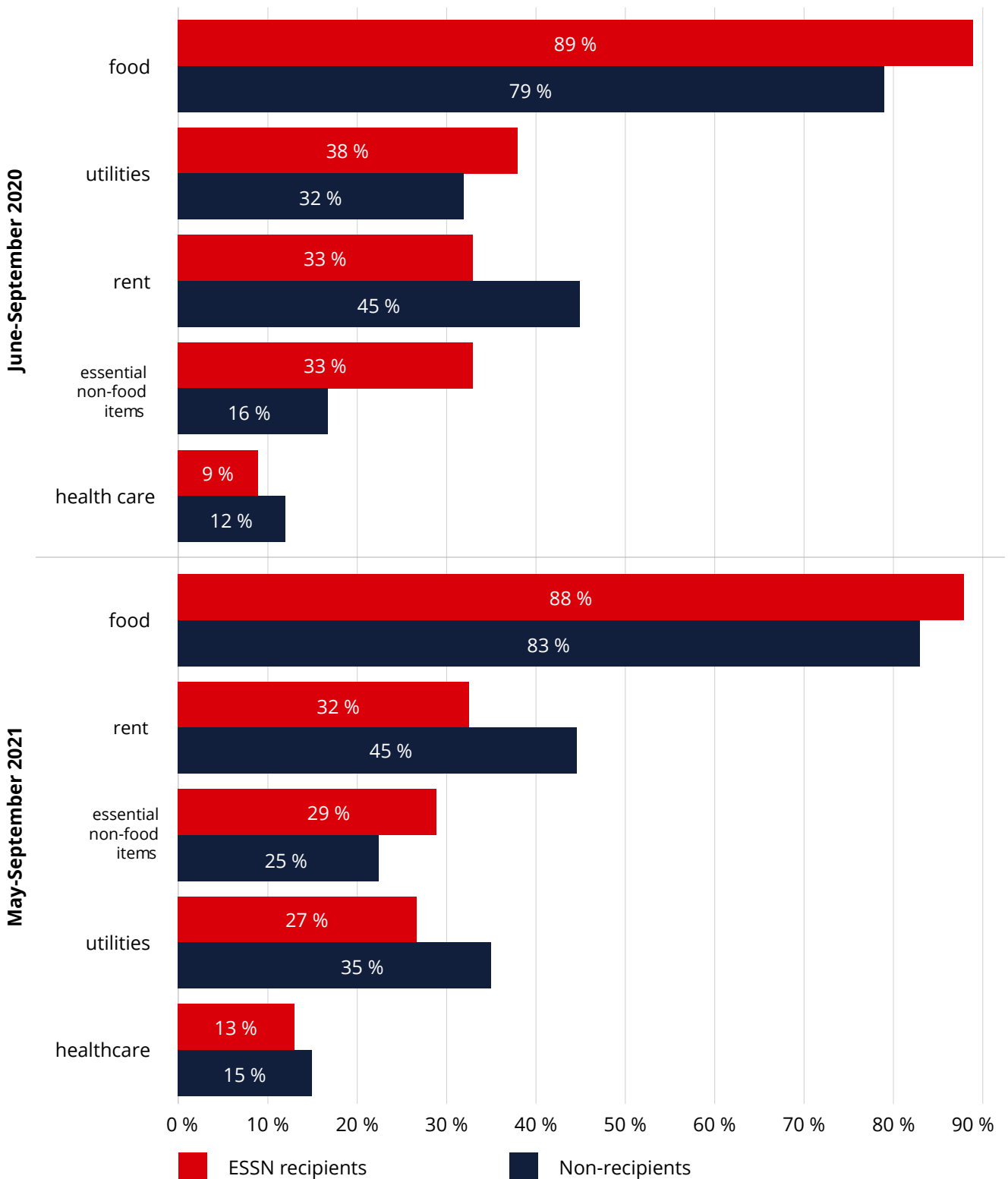
Figure 9: Sources of debt



Food, rent and utilities were the main reasons for acquiring debt

ESSN applicants borrowed to cover their most basic needs, namely food, rent and utilities followed by essential non-food items and health care. For ESSN recipients, 88 per cent borrowed for food while this rate was 83 per cent for non-recipients. The percentage of those acquiring debt to pay utilities considerably reduced compared to PDM10 figures for ESSN recipient households (from 38 to 27 per cent).

Figure 10: Top five reasons for acquiring debt



COPING STRATEGIES



Food security worsened for ESSN recipients while it improved for non-recipients; the most adopted strategy was consumption of less preferred and cheaper food.

Longer term household coping and productive capacities (as reflected in the increase in LCSi) deteriorated for ESSN recipients, while LCSi score is high for both ESSN recipients and non-recipients.

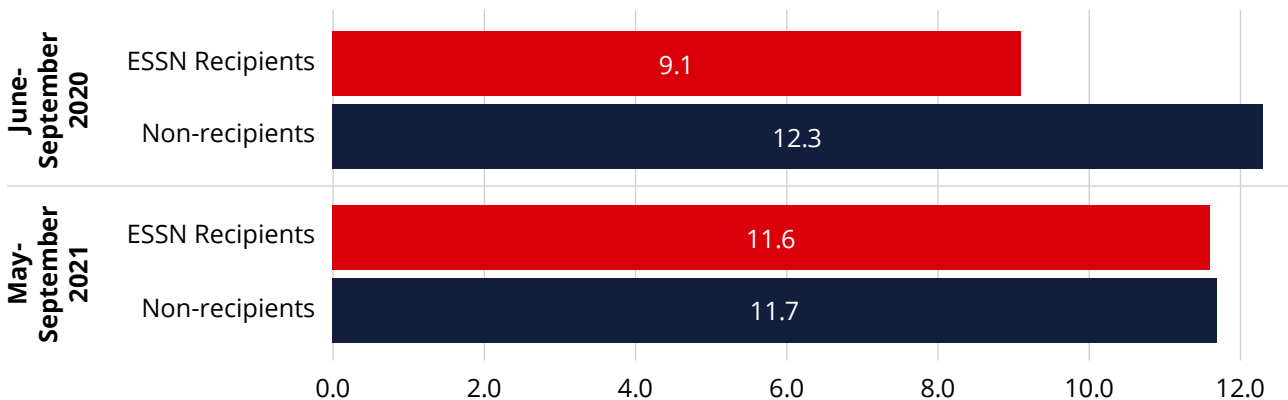
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

When livelihoods are negatively affected by an economic shock, households may adopt various unusual strategies to cope with reduced or declining access to food. The Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) is often used as a proxy indicator of household food insecurity. It includes five specific consumption coping strategies, each given a standard severity weight, and aggregated into an index. Strategies include relying on less preferred or cheaper food, borrowing food, or relying on help from friends or relatives, reducing the number of meals eaten per day, reducing the portion size of meals and reducing the quantities consumed by adults so children can eat. A high score of rCSI is an indication of worsening of food security standards for the households and vice versa.²²

Food security worsened for ESSN recipients

According to PDM 12, both ESSN recipients and non-recipients adopt coping strategies related to food security at concerning levels. As shown in Figure 11, rCSI score rose from 9.14 to 11.6 for the ESSN recipients while it slightly improved for the non-recipients since PDM 10. It has been noted that as food security worsens, households are more likely to employ strategies that are less reversible, and therefore are pushed towards more severe forms of coping due to greater food insecurity.²³

Figure 11: RCSI by ESSN eligibility status



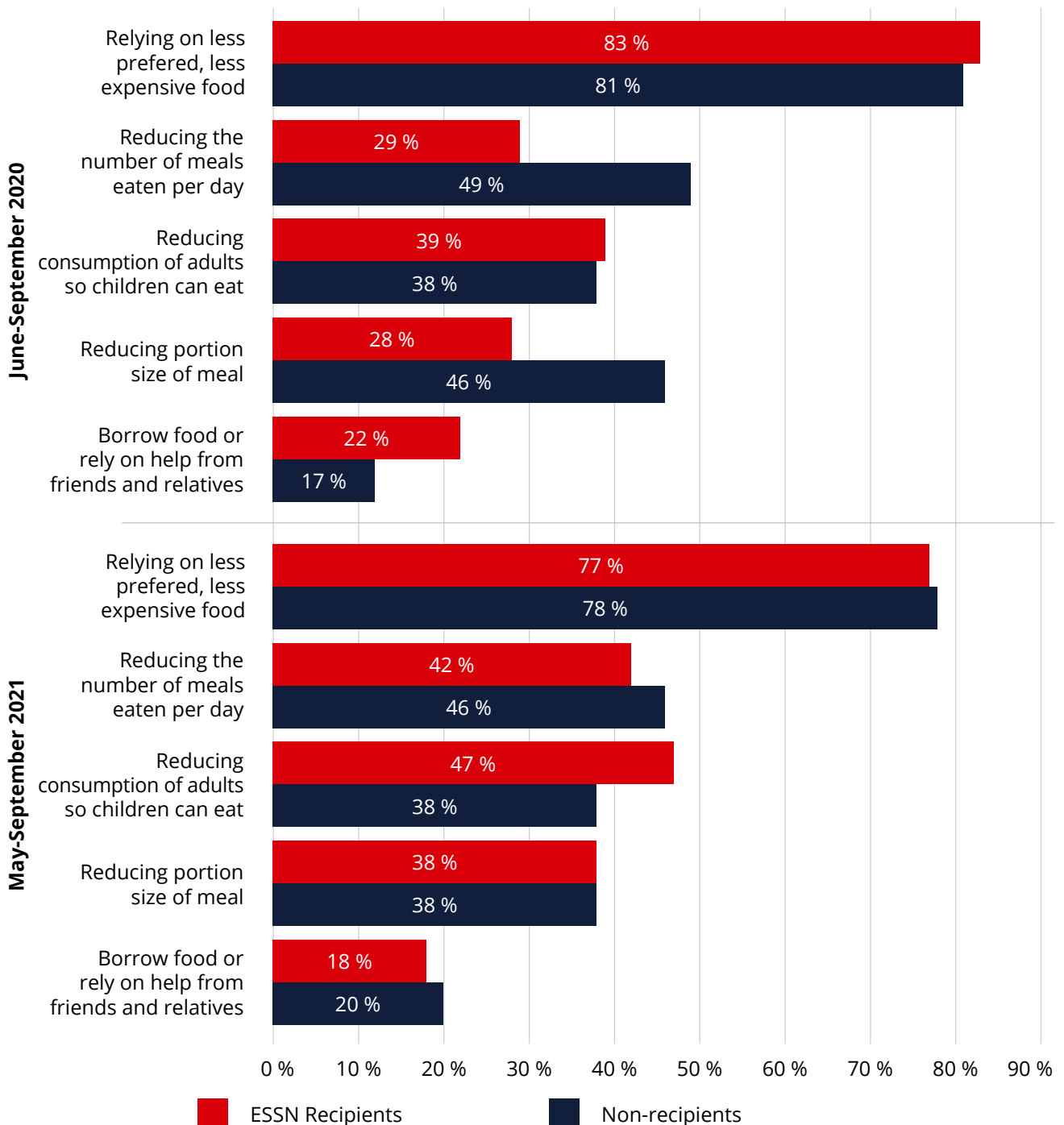
22 • Maxwell et al. (2003). "The Coping Strategies Index: A Tool for Rapid Measurement of Household Food Security and the Impact of Food Aid Programs in Humanitarian Emergencies". Field Methods Manual. Developed for CARE Eastern and Central Africa Regional Management Unit (CARE-EARMU) and World Food Programme Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) Unit. For more detail information; <http://www.fao.org/3/ae513e/ae513e.pdf>

23 • Maxwell and Caldwell (2008). "A tool for rapid measurement of household food security and the impact of food aid programs in humanitarian emergencies". Field Methods Manual Second Edition, January 2008.

PDM 12 findings indicate that ESSN recipient households not only relied on coping strategies related to food quality, but have also adopted coping strategies related to food quantity. Relying on less preferred or less expensive food was the mostly adopted reduced coping strategy for both ESSN recipient and non-recipient households. Higher percentage of ESSN recipient households reduced the number of meals consumed per day, reduced portion size of meals, and reduced consumption of adults to enable children to eat.

“We just wish for a bottle of olive oil and a kilo of rice. The rest doesn't matter. We can do without fruit, milk, and such other things. As long as we can pay for electricity, water, and heating expenses...”
 – Female, ESSN recipient, Hatay

Figure 12: Adoption of reduced coping strategies



Livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI)

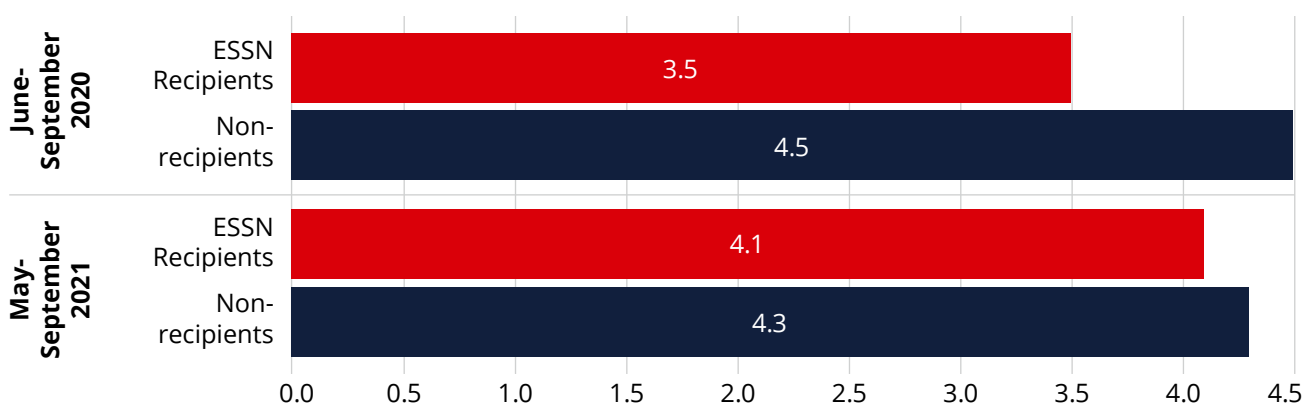
Livelihood-based coping strategy index aims to assess household level livelihood and economic security based on income, expenditure and assets to understand households' longer term coping capacities in response to economic shocks. To measure LCSI, participants were asked if, they had resorted to using any of the 13 pre-determined livelihoods coping strategies in the month prior to the survey (listed in Figure 14) and these were combined into a weighted sum known as LCSI.

The livelihood coping strategies are categorized into three; stress, crisis, and emergency. Each component represents sets of behavior with different degrees of severity, emergency coping strategies being the most severe set of behaviours.²⁴

Longer-term household coping and productive capacities (as reflected in increasing LCSI) deteriorated for ESSN recipients

Understanding how the households adapts to recent crises provides insights into the state of difficulty, and how likely they will be able to meet challenges in the future. Households were asked if anyone in their households had to engage in any of the 13 coping strategies because there was not enough money to cover the households' basic needs. during the past 30 days. From PDM 10 to PDM 12, LCSI score increased for the ESSN recipients (meaning their coping and productive capacities deteriorated) while it only slightly decreased for non-recipients. There is no longer a statistically significant difference between recipients and non-recipients in terms of their adoption of livelihood coping strategies.²⁵

Figure 13: LCSI by ESSN eligibility status



Households show more tendency to resort to measures that help them cope with the lack of resources to meet their basic needs. There was a sharp increase in the number of ESSN recipient households adopting crisis coping strategies since PDM10.

The most frequently adopted **stress coping strategy** was purchasing food on credit, (76 per cent for the ESSN recipient and 63 per cent for non-recipient households), followed by borrowing money from non-relatives to cover basic needs (52 per cent for ESSN recipient and 55 per cent for non-recipient households).

Cutting down on health (33 per cent of ESSN recipient and 36 per cent of non-recipient households) and education (31 per cent of ESSN recipient and 22 per cent of non-recipient households) expenses were the most frequently applied **crisis coping strategies**. Particularly, the percentage of recipient households reducing health expenditures dramatically increased from 15 per cent in PDM10 to 33 per cent in PDM12.

24 • The severity weights are; (1) for stress coping strategies, (2) for crisis coping strategies, (3) for emergency coping strategies. The weighted sum of this variable is then calculated to obtain the LCSI score. A higher value of LCSI is an indication that the household is experiencing food and economic insecurity.

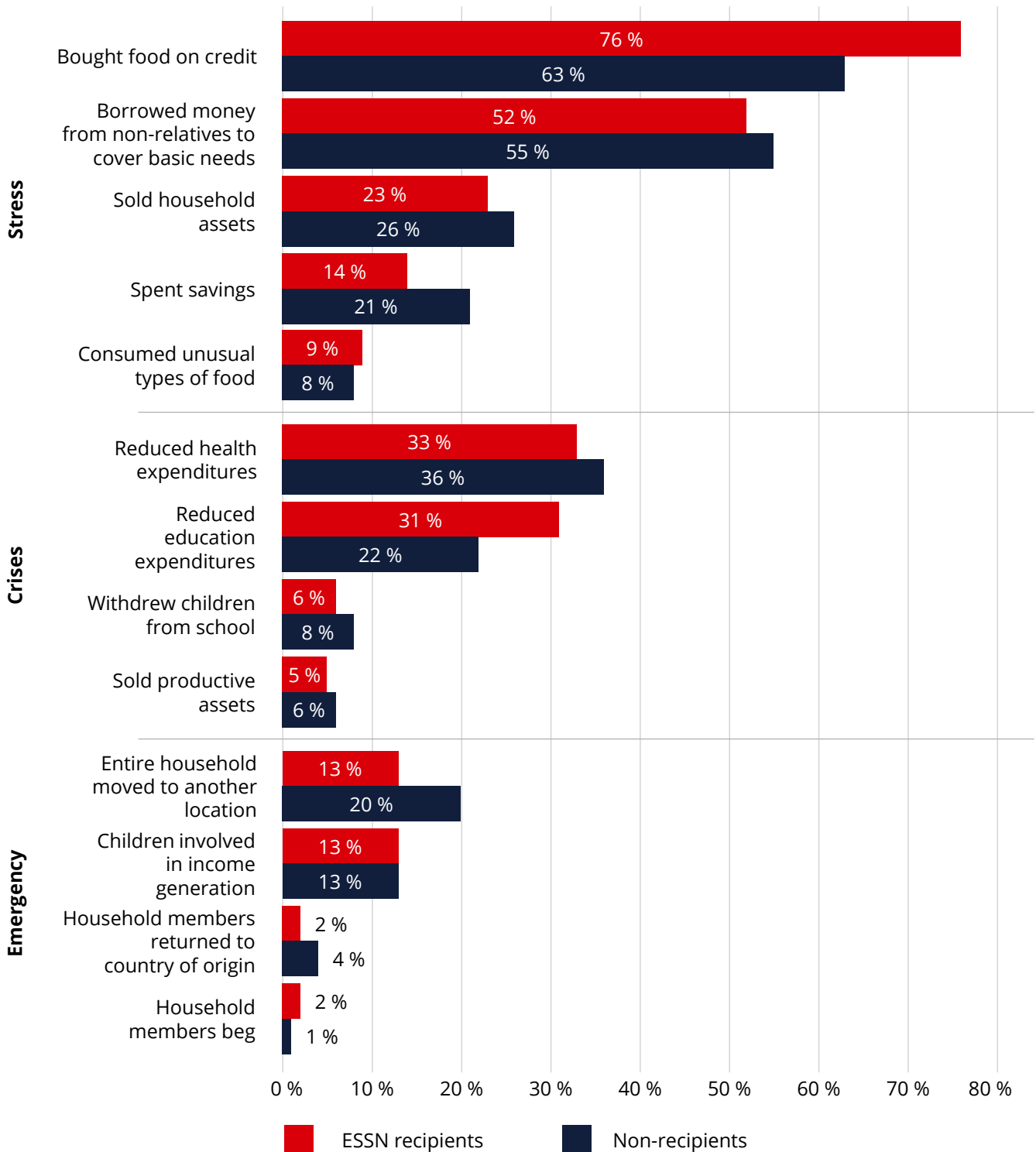
25 • Wilcoxon signed rank sum test was utilized to see whether there is any statistically significant difference between matched samples. mean of household's rCSI scores does not show any statistically significant difference between PDM10 and PDM1

The most frequently adopted **emergency coping strategy** for both recipient and non-recipient households were moving the entire household to another location (13 and 20 per cent for respective groups) and involving children in income generation (13 per cent for both groups).



“We meet our basic needs at the minimum level. There are many things we avoid. Things like buying clothes, shoes, medicine, going to the doctor or a dentist. If we need painkillers, we buy the cheapest. Our health is getting worse and worse because we cannot go to the doctor and be treated.” – Female, ESSN recipient, Ankara

Figure 14: Adoption of livelihood coping strategies



FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

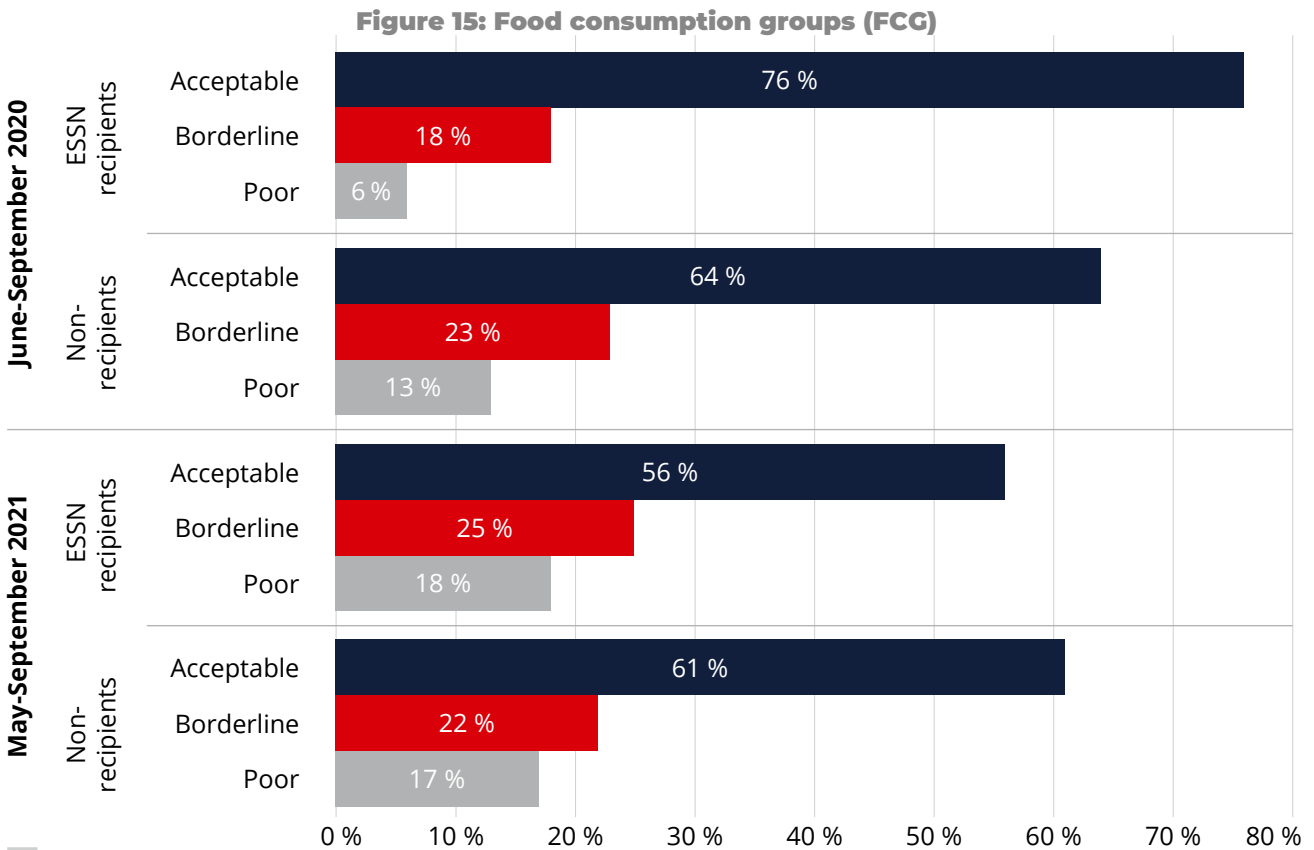


20% decrease in households with acceptable food consumption.

The drastic decrease in ESN recipients with acceptable food consumption score from 76 per cent to 56 per cent indicates that despite an increase in their income, households still struggle to afford their most basic needs.

ESN recipient households experienced a deterioration in acceptable food consumption score

The quantity of food that ESN recipient households consume decreased since PDM 10. As shown in Figure 15, comparing PDM10 with PDM12, percentage of ESN recipients with acceptable food consumption score²⁶(FCS) has significantly reduced by about 20 per cent, while percentage of households with poor FCS grew, from 6 per cent to 18 per cent. In addition, despite similarities in percentages compared with PDM 10, there is a significant difference in food consumption groups of non-recipient households as well.²⁷




26 • The Food Consumption Score (FCS) measures households' food consumption habits, the diversity and frequency of the food they consume in the seven days prior to the data collection. It is grouped into three categories, poor, borderline, and acceptable.

27 • McNemar's Chi-squared test was utilized to see whether there is any statistically significant difference between matched samples. Test result shows that there is a statistically significant change between PDM10 and PDM12 in terms of non-recipient households' Food Consumption Groups

PDM 12 findings also reveal that 41.7 per cent for ESSN recipient households and 38.7 per cent of non-recipients did not consume fruits within 7 days prior to data collection. In addition, a decrease in consumption of relatively expensive food items, such as pulses, nuts and seeds and eggs, meat and fish were observed, around half of the ESSN applicant households either did not consume them or consumed them once a week.

EDUCATION

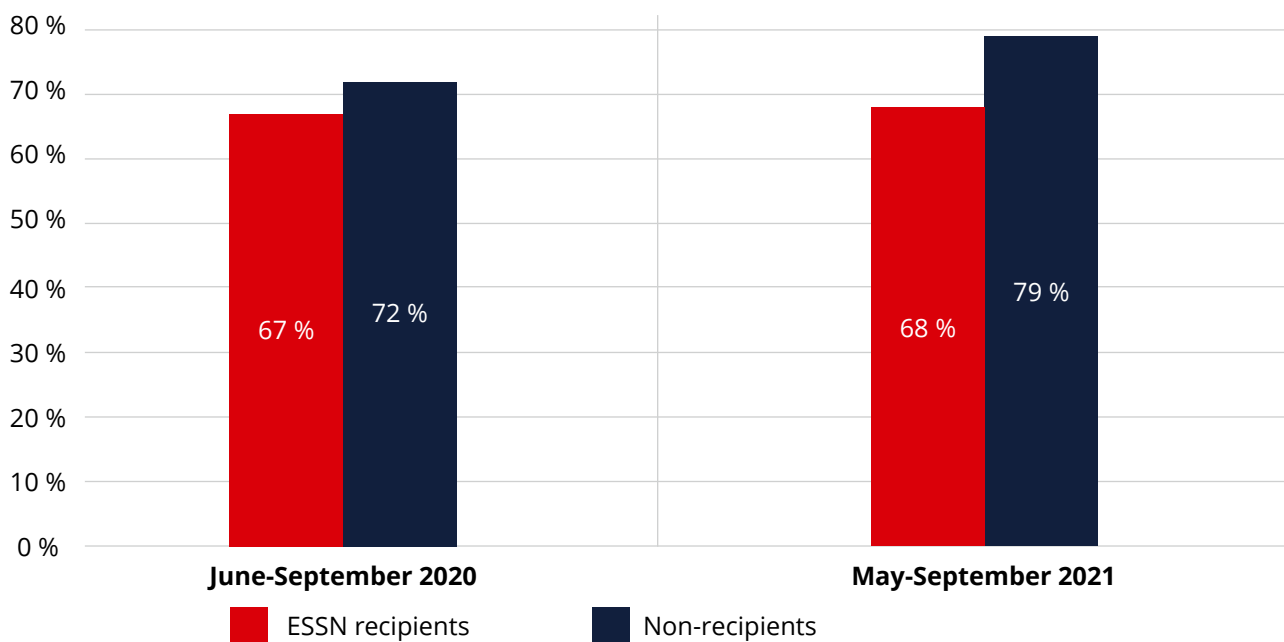


70% of households with school-going children have access to the online curriculum

This access has increased since last year (PDM 10). For those who do not have access to the online curriculum, the main reasons were lack of Internet access and electronic devices.

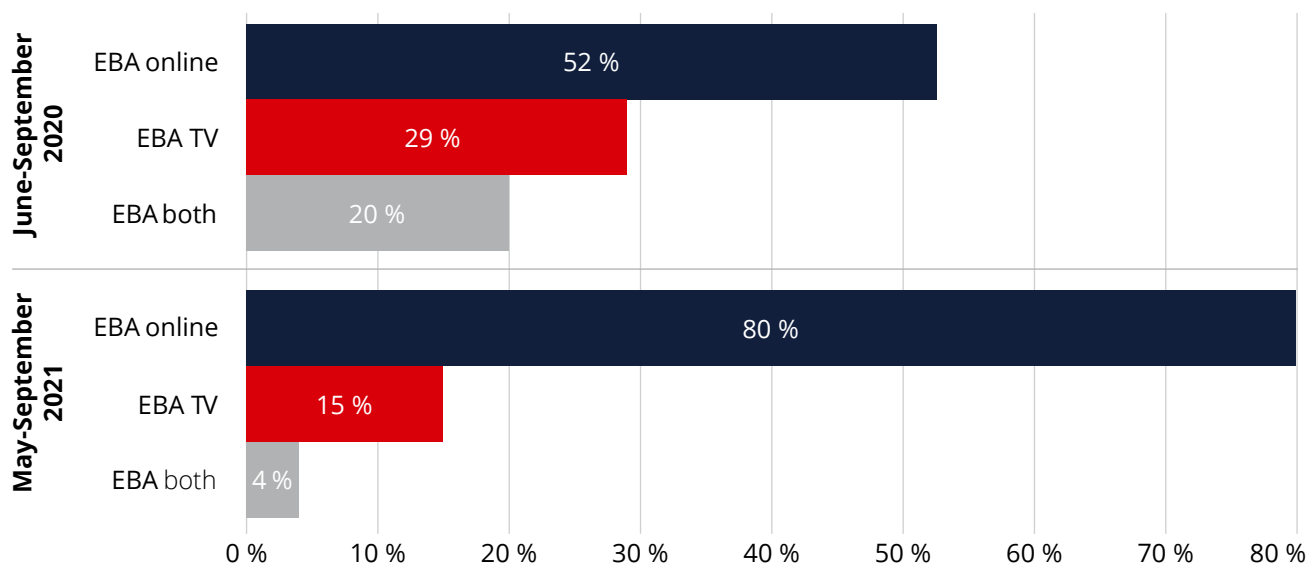
The average number of school aged children (6-17 years old) attending school has risen compared to PDM10. Between PDM 10 and PDM 12, percentage of households in which all children attend school remained stable at around 67 per cent, but this has increased for non-recipient households, reaching almost 80 per cent. Among those who could not attend, the main reason given was lack of access to internet and / or electronic devices to participate in online / remote education, followed by other reasons which require further inquiries.

Figure 16: % of children who have access the online school curriculum



EBA online was the most preferred service to access online/remote education, with an increase compared to PDM 12.

Figure 17: Services used to access online/remote curriculum



The percentage of households that faced challenges using these services also increased, specifically lack of equipment (from 7 per cent to 25 per cent), difficulties in understanding and following the lessons (from 17 to 19 per cent) and internet availability (from 8 to 14 per cent).



CONCLUSION

PDM 10 was conducted between June and September 2020, during the first year of the pandemic, and results were reflecting the initial impact of strict measures taken against the pandemic. A year later, PDM 12 revealed how ESSN applicants adjusted to challenges over the past 12 months. It was apparent that some of socio-economic indicators were deteriorating such as increasing debt levels, decreasing food consumption and frequent adoption of negative coping strategies despite improvements in income levels. The main findings of the study can be listed as follows:

Increase in income did not cover for the increased expenditure: There was a 33 per cent increase in median total income from PDM 10 to PDM 12, yet, increase in income was not enough to cover increased expenditure, 88 per cent of ESSN applicant households had income (excluding ESSN and CCTE) below total expenditure.

The gap between income and expenditure was covered via increasing amount of debt: However, low rates of repayment signal that being in debt is a protracted situation for ESSN applicants, at least in the short term. Despite the increase in income levels, both livelihood coping strategies and reduced coping strategies were more frequently adopted by ESSN recipient households compared with those in PDM 10 which indicates that income increase did not translate into household economic well-being.

Decreasing food consumption score:

Significantly lower percentage of ESSN recipient

households with acceptable food consumption score, as well as the sharp increase in their median food expenses, indicate that food consumption has become an area of concern which requires further evaluation.



Considering these key findings, following are suggested as recommendations.

Consider a large-scale study on livelihoods: To be able to understand patterns of income and employment, a large-scale survey which analyses employment preferences, capabilities, challenges, and opportunities could be conducted as an addition to existing studies. Designed as a gender sensitive survey, it could also provide insights regarding improvement of livelihood strategies.

Conduct focus group discussions on food consumption behaviour: Increase in food expenditure is an important finding of the study. Conducting a series of focus group discussions on food consumption behavior can shed light on obtaining in-depth information about ESSN applicants' routines, the difficulties they face, and their food related coping strategies. This study would also enrich the programme understanding about the concept of MEB and provide information to tailor it even better.

Conduct key informant interviews focused on changing borrowing patterns: Results indicate a change of pattern in the source of debt; higher percentage of ESSN applicants are indebted to local shops, yet knowledge on dynamics related to borrowing from local shops is very limited. Key informant interviews that focus on these dynamics, exploring limits and conditions of borrowing from the local shops could provide further information about alternative coping strategies which might be adopted by the refugees.

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