

## Cost of the Diet Analysis among Syrian Refugees in Azraq Camp, Jordan

**Cost of the Diet**<sup>1</sup>: Estimates at the lowest cost, the quantity and combination of local foods that are needed to provide a typical family with foods that meet their average needs for energy and their recommended intakes of protein, fat and micronutrients.

### Problem/ knowledge gaps:

- 656,400 Syrian refugees in Jordan; 37,659 currently living in Azraq Camp (July 2016);
- No food security and dietary diversity indicators available for Azraq camp.

### Objectives

- To understand the extent to which economic poverty and typical dietary habits prevent households and vulnerable individuals from consuming a nutritious diet;
- To understand how refugees in settings such as Azraq Camp can meet energy and nutrient requirements using local foods, and use this information to inform nutrition and food security program design;
- To inform and influence nutrition and food security related policy and advocacy processes within Azraq Camp, and in similar protracted camp settings;
- To build capacity of key partners in this methodology.

### Results

- For a standard family of five (2 parents, 3 children aged 12-23 months, 4-5 years and 9-10 years) a nutritious diet is available in Azraq Camp, but a nutritious diet that takes into account the basic dietary habits of Syrian residents of Azraq camp (food habits diet) is not affordable;
- Although bread is provided for free, a food habits diet is barely affordable, and there is no money to vary the food items or to purchase herbs or condiments traditionally used in meal preparation;
- Although for the standard family of five a nutritious diet is available, this is not the case for families with a different composition, with equally common family compositions unable to meet nutritional requirements given their resources;
- If vegetables would be available at no cost, for example through micro-gardening, a food habits nutritious diet would be affordable for families, and would even reflect better the diet people used to consume when still living in Syria.

### Lessons learned from adapting the CotD tool to a camp setting

- Essential to get buy-in and participation from all partners active in the refugee camp response;
- It is critical to properly plan and prepare the CotD study, especially when the time available for training and data collection is limited;
- Standard CotD questionnaires should be adapted to the camp setting;
- Seasonality may be less important than aid distribution schedules for the CotD modeling in a camp setting;
- Wealth status considerations should take into account both wealth status coming into the camp, and adapted wealth status given camp conditions;
- Further modeling should be considered based on individual-specific conditions (e.g. diabetes).
- **Conclusion:** the Cost of the Diet tool can be used in closed camp settings with only minor adjustments to the methodology

### Recommendations

- Re-evaluate the value of the food vouchers as not all households can afford a nutritious diet and no households can afford a food habits diet;
- Investigate the use of vouchers or credit card in the markets instead of only in the central supermarket;
- Work with the supermarket to ensure availability at affordable prices of fruits, vegetables and meats;
- Support families who would like to do micro-gardening so they can grow free vegetables as part of their diet;
- Do a market survey and run the CotD analysis for the winter season;
- Create more jobs for people living in Azraq, preference to recruit people from smaller families or families with only adolescents and/or adults (i.e. family compositions that cannot afford the nutrition diet), and make arrangements to allow single parents to get a job (e.g. child care).

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