

Education for Lebanese and Syrians

Incentivising enrolment, attendance and good nutrition

To address the critical issue of limited primary education for displaced Syrian and vulnerable Lebanese children, the World Food Programme (WFP) partnered with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to develop an education programme with two components: the provision of healthy school snacks and classes on good nutrition.

SCHOOL SNACKS

With local partner, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), students in 39 double shift primary schools are given a combination of fresh fruit, milk and baked peanuts each day, all made in Lebanon.

The selected schools are located in vulnerable areas of the country, identified by MEHE. Those schools offer a second afternoon shift, mostly for Syrian students. By targeting both groups, the programme promotes social stability between refugees and host communities.

The daily snack pack acts as an incentive to improve children's access and retention in school, enhance overall educational outcomes by increasing their ability to concentrate by reducing short-term hunger during school hours, as well as improve nutritional outcomes by contributing towards dietary diversity.

As part of MEHE's health curriculum, students also receive monthly nutrition education sessions by school health educators with the support of IOCC. Sessions introduce students to the importance of healthy eating and physical activity as well as other nutrition-related topics.

By April 2019, five million school snacks had been distributed to students across Lebanon. During programme implementation, less daily absenteeism was noticed in schools, more so in the afternoon sessions, and children gave consistently positive feedback on the sessions.

WFP, IOCC and MEHE also run summer nutrition camps in school premises where the same students learn more about good nutrition.