In the years preceding the massive economic downturn that has affected Lebanon starting in 2019, high levels of extreme poverty and food insecurity were serious concerns primarily for the Syrian refugee population hosted by Lebanon. The situation, however, changed dramatically in 2020 as rising prices and the economic recession, compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut explosion have impoverished over half the Lebanese population and almost the entire Syrian refugee population and threatens to push many more into poverty.

Rising poverty is leading to more food insecurity in Lebanon. WFP surveys found that 22 percent of Lebanese, 50 percent of Syrian refugees, and 33 percent of refugees of other nationalities are food insecure. Food access and availability have become major issues, with food prices out of reach for most, and retailers facing serious challenges to restock and to keep their businesses afloat. The ongoing reduction of subsidies, and the imminent discontinuation in the coming months, is likely to make the situation much worse – as affordable food items and fuel become scarce, competition for basic resources and social tensions are on the rise.


WFP has been present in Lebanon since 2012.

Operational Updates

- In May, WFP assisted a total of 1,217,612 beneficiaries through cash-based transfer modalities amounting to USD 13.6 million and through distribution of family food parcels. The people assisted were 241,780 vulnerable Lebanese, 955,017 Syrian refugees, and 20,815 refugees of other nationalities.

- Following successful negotiations with the Central Bank and financial service provider, Banque Libano-Française, the LOUISE agencies (WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF) obtained approval to deliver humanitarian assistance as of May using a preferential exchange rate of LBP 12,000 to the dollar – parallel to the market rate – which will be revised every 15 days. This new rate allows WFP to fully realize the value of donor contributions and to reach more people in need and to provide adequate assistance (provided authorization is granted by the Government to adjust transfer values).

- In May, WFP assisted 167,000 vulnerable Lebanese (26,400 households) through the ongoing scale-up of the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) – an increase of 60 percent compared to April. On the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, beneficiaries received cash-based transfers for May and June. In addition, in May, each NPTP beneficiary household started receiving a cash top-up of LBP 200,000 to help cover additional food needs.

- WFP reached 18,256 beneficiaries in May through its livelihoods activities comprising of Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) and Food Assistance for Training (FFT). In addition, through the Food Systems Grant Facility, WFP provided 222 small businesses affected by the Beirut Port explosion with grants totalling USD 590,000 to help cover needs for rehabilitation, equipment, employee salaries, and business-related rent and debt.

- Distributions of take-home rations for more than 25,000 families (133,615 individuals) whose students are enrolled in the 83 schools that are part of WFP’s school programme took place throughout May. Families received a 30-kg food parcel of staple food items through staggered distributions at the schools.

In Numbers

- **1,217,612** people assisted in May 2021
- **US$13.6 m** cash-based transfers made
- **US$237.4 m** six-month net funding requirements (June 2021 – November 2021)
WFP Country Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Result</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Focus area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Everyone has access to food</td>
<td>Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food (CBTs and in-kind food assistance)</td>
<td>Crisis response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Vulnerable women and men in targeted refugee and Lebanese communities sustainably improve their skills, capacities, and livelihood opportunities by 2020</td>
<td>Individual capacity strengthening activities (CBTs) and asset creation and livelihood support activities (CBTs)</td>
<td>Resilience-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Vulnerable populations in Lebanon are enabled to meet their basic food needs all year long</td>
<td>Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food (CBT)</td>
<td>Root causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Enhanced global partnerships</td>
<td>Institutional capacity strengthening activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategic Outcome 1: Food-insecure refugees – including school-age children – and crisis-affected host populations have access to lifesaving, nutritious and affordable food throughout the year

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:
- Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food (CBTs and in-kind food assistance)
- School meal activities

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable women and men in targeted refugee and Lebanese communities sustainably improve their skills, capacities, and livelihood opportunities by 2020

Focus area: Resilience-building

Activities:
- Individual capacity strengthening activities (CBTs)
- Asset creation and livelihood support activities (CBTs)

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable populations in Lebanon are enabled to meet their basic food needs all year long

Focus area: Root causes

Activities: Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food (CBT)

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Focus area: Root causes

Activities: Institutional capacity strengthening activities

Strategic Result 8: Enhanced global partnerships

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities: Provision of Logistics sector and procurement services to all partners

- As of 31 May, 98 percent of beneficiaries who received their cash-based entitlements redeemed their assistance through shops and ATMs.
- WFP market and price monitoring found that in May the price of the food portion of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) reached LBP 237,385, marking an 11 percent increase from April.

A Story Worth Telling

Women are turning over the roses, to make sure they remain at a cool temperature. Photo: WFP/Edmond Khoury

For the women participating in WFP’s Livelihoods project at the Khayrat Rashaya cooperative, where different food items are prepared, spring has become a significant source of income. As the flowers bloom and become ready for picking, the women collect the roses and eventually produce what is known as rose water.

This intricate process of producing rose water requires precision and cooperation. On any given day, employees at the cooperative must collect 50 to 150 kilos of roses before the sun reaches its peak. After collection, the roses must be constantly turned and cooled to avoid any damage.

According to Hawraa, the head of staff at the organization, the process requires cooperation from the whole village, including farmers. She claims that the cooperative was able to create job opportunities that provide an income for the people of the village in a time when unemployment was on the rise. “The purpose of the cooperative is to help rural women develop their skills and boost their livelihoods during this difficult economic situation,” she explained.

Donors

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, European Commission, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Switzerland, UN CERF, United Kingdom, USA

Contact info: Yein Kim, Head of Reporting (yein.kim@wfp.org)
Country Director: Abdallah Alwardat
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Lebanon