



Food and Basic Assistance for Refugees in Lebanon

Over 10 years into the Syrian refugee crisis, WFP's cash assistance remains a lifeline of hope for 1 million refugees in Lebanon

Since 2012, the World Food Programme has been providing assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, first with food parcels, then paper vouchers, and since 2013 with cash-based assistance through electronic cards.

Today, with almost all Syrian refugees in Lebanon living in extreme poverty, WFP assistance is more critical than ever to ensure the food and basic needs of the most vulnerable are met.

In addition to supporting Syrian refugees, WFP has also been providing assistance to Palestinian refugees from Syria since 2014 and to refugees of other nationalities since 2019.

E-cards are loaded monthly with LBP 100,000 per person for food needs and for the most vulnerable, LBP 400,000 per family for other essential needs such as shelter, health, and education. The amount of cash and degree of flexibility in the use of the e-card varies according to vulnerability, with all extremely vulnerable people receiving food assistance while families with greater needs receive additional support.

As the prices of food and other essential goods keep rising due to the deepening economic crisis, WFP continues to advocate for increased cash transfer values to provide adequate levels of assistance.

ONE CARD, THREE CASH MODALITIES

Food e-cards: LBP 100,000 per person/month. 291,000 Syrian refugees (65,660 families) use their e-cards to buy food at any of the 400+ WFP-contracted shops across the country. Shops are selected based on their ability to provide quality service, diverse and healthy food products, and accessible prices for both Syrian and Lebanese customers.



Cash for food e-card: LBP 100,000 per person/month. 331,000 Syrian refugees (44,540 families) and 8,000 refugees of other nationalities (2,472 families) can decide whether to use their e-cards to withdraw cash from ATMs or to buy food from any shop, including WFP-contracted shops.



Multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card: LBP 100,000 per person + LBP 400,000 per household/month. 332,000 Syrian refugees (65,580 families) use their e-cards to withdraw cash from ATMs and decide how best to meet their essential needs, including food.



In addition, 14,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria receive unrestricted cash assistance each month through a separate e-card.

1 M PEOPLE receive cash-based transfers in 2021 to meet their food and other basic needs

US\$2.2 BILLION injected into the local economy since the beginning of WFP's assistance in 2012



It's lunch time at Aisha's. Her four daughters come together every day and share a meal. Photo: WFP/Edmond Khoury

Cash assistance provides greater choice and agency, an important social, psychological, and cultural anchor for refugee families living in difficult times.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE

Through cash-based assistance, families are empowered with the ability to buy the food they choose in shops and the freedom to withdraw cash from ATMs and use it as they see fit – whether for food, shelter, education, medical bills, or otherwise. WFP has found that when vulnerable families are provided with purchasing power, they make choices that improve their wellbeing and are less likely to sacrifice food security to meet other needs.

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

By enabling people to spend cash on local goods and services, cash assistance also supports the local economy: over USD 2.2 billion has been injected into the Lebanese economy since the beginning of WFP's refugee crisis response. In addition, Lebanese shopkeepers and customers benefit from the capacity strengthening and trainings provided by WFP to improve retail standards and services.

ENHANCING HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION

Together, WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF and other NGOs provide basic assistance to refugees through LOUISE, a unified system for cash transfers developed in collaboration with WFP's local financial service provider (FSP). This means that beneficiaries are able to access a variety of humanitarian cash assistance through a common card.

ENSURING IMPACT & ACCOUNTABILITY

WFP and partners rely on a joint assessment and targeting system, based on the annual Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees, Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees of Other Nationalities (VARoN) and an econometric formula, to identify and rank refugees by vulnerability. This allows WFP to prioritize

For Aisha and her family of eight, life has been a struggle. The family first moved to Lebanon mid-2016, seeking refuge from the Syrian war. After almost a year and a half, Aisha was finally informed that she will be receiving WFP assistance.

"When I found out I was selected, I was more than ecstatic. It is a feeling I cannot describe. I will never forget that day. Thank God."

Through the generous support of its donors, WFP is providing Lebanon's most vulnerable families with multi-purpose cash assistance that keeps them afloat as the going gets tough. This family was already struggling with money, education, and lack of food, with COVID-19 increasing their already heavy burden. However, WFP's cash assistance allowed them to survive the pandemic.

"We use the cash to pay for different expenses. It helps us with rent, my daughter's education, medication, and of course, food."

finite resources and assistance for the families most in need.

The Grievance Redress Mechanism is an accountability mechanism used to collect and address appeals related to exclusion errors during beneficiary targeting, with an emphasis on developing more inclusive eligibility criteria.

Beneficiary feedback and queries are received primarily through a WFP call centre. Other channels for communication with beneficiaries include SMS, outreach volunteers, and community representatives.

WFP uses the Basic Needs Outcome Monitoring (BNOM) to monitor the food security situation, food consumption and the use of coping strategies among families receiving WFP assistance.

ADAPTING TO A CHALLENGING CONTEXT

WFP has been adapting its programme strategy and delivery in response to increasing banking restrictions, exchange rate fluctuations, and market disruptions. Regular market assessments are conducted to monitor the availability of food and non-food items, prices at WFP-contracted shops, and potential supply chain issues. E-cards are loaded with cash assistance in batches to avoid crowding at ATMs and to allow for replenishment of cash. Additional ATMs were installed and additional shops are being contracted to increase access points for beneficiaries. In addition, WFP successfully negotiated a preferential exchange rate with the Central Bank, which is enabling WFP and partners to reach more refugees on a monthly basis as well as maximizing the value of contributions.

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