



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Support to Refugees

Background

Political instability and social unrest in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions have resulted in a continued flow of refugees into Malawi for over two decades, with the vast majority now residing in/around the Dzaleka Refugee Camp.

In partnership with the Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WFP continues to provide monthly food assistance to meet urgent food and nutritional needs of over 42,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Dzaleka Refugee Camp.

The influx of new arrivals slowed in early 2020 due to COVID-19-related border closures. In 2020, over 2,000 new arrivals, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, were registered.

Relief support

From May 2019, WFP provided in-kind/cash at half rations to all households. Thanks to additional resources from ECHO, the ration was increased to 75 percent between September and December 2020.

A gradual move to e-payments started in October 2020, with a pilot involving 100 households to be used to inform further scale-up as it continues into 2021.

However, supplementary capital investments for additional automated teller machines and other digital equipment for the scale-up were still required. Since March 2021, WFP switched to cash distributions for the full food basket (maize, pulses and vegetable oil) for refugees in 2021.

From April 2020, WFP provided nutritional prevention ration, which included Super Cereal, to all households. Following the emergence of COVID-19, WFP adjusted its distributions

from monthly to bi-monthly as a way of limiting exposure for beneficiaries, staff and partners, in addition to introducing several preventive measures.

Towards self-reliance

Over the years, some refugees within the camp have gained access to alternative livelihoods and economic opportunities, making them less food insecure. Provision of blanket assistance is costly and does not address the varying vulnerability levels found in the camp.

WFP developed a comprehensive transition strategy, including a gradual shift to cash-based transfers, providing assistance to households classified as most vulnerable, while others would benefit from livelihood-based programmes, benefiting both refugees and host communities, hence promoting social cohesion.

The actual implementation of the transition was delayed due to COVID-19. A pilot of 200 households started in December 2020 with the production of soya and mushroom, as well as cloth facemasks and soaps to contribute to COVID-19 prevention within the camp.





Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

At a global level, a more predictable and comprehensive response to refugee crisis, known as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), calls for greater support to refugees and the countries that host them.

Although Malawi has agreed to the various refugee conventions, several obstacles towards local integration and self-reliance remain, such as restricted access to formal wage labor and limitations on freedom of movement. The Government of Malawi has committed to rolling out the CRRF within the National Development Strategy and its cooperation agreement with the United Nations. WFP will continue advocating to promote an enabling environment for increased refugee self-reliance and explore opportunities to promote sustainable refugee livelihoods.

Key Results

In March 2020, WFP conducted a door-to-door household vulnerability profiling exercise to determine unique vulnerabilities, allowing WFP to plan for more tailored assistance packages in the future. Results of the in-depth profiling survey showed that the levels of vulnerability remained widespread, while food security was stable, largely due to WFP's food assistance.

Results from a Post-Distribution Distribution (November 2020) indicated there was an improvement in almost all recorded food security indicators between 2019 and 2020, with a significant improvement in terms of dietary diversity. This could be due to the switch from in-kind assistance to cash for the maize component, a better harvest experienced this year, and increase in the ration size. Beneficiaries also reported they preferred cash as it allowed them greater flexibility in line with cultural consumption preferences.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD



"My name is Musago Mirida, I am a mother of 3 and I am a refugee from Burundi in Malawi. I was born a refugee in Tanzania and I have been a refugee my whole life. In 2012, I was 17 and we went back to Burundi. I stayed there for 2 years but because of violence, we had to leave again to find peace in Malawi in 2014. I work in people's field to have some money to buy clothes for my children. I am divorced and my son had to stop school to work and bring some money home. I mostly depend on the food assistance to feed my children. We only eat simple things we can afford but now that we are getting cash assistance, I'm able to better plan and buy rice once in a while."

Get a glimpse of the life in Dzaleka Refugee Camp where WFP is providing food assistance to about 43,000 refugees. [Learn more here.](#)

