



WFP Lebanon



SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

## 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 over 1 million refugees in Lebanon*

The World Food Programme has been providing assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon since 2012 — first with food parcels, then paper vouchers, and since 2013 with cash-based assistance through electronic cards. WFP has also been supporting refugees of other nationalities since 2019 and supported Palestinian refugees from Syria between 2014 and 2021.

WFP's cash assistance became more crucial than ever amid an economic crisis that rendered the already difficult living conditions even more challenging. Currently, nine in one refugees are living in extreme poverty, while more than half are suffering from insecurity.

The amount of cash beneficiaries receive 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 continued to rise due to the deepening economic crisis, inflation outpaced the transfer values of cash assistance, which despite increases in 2020 and 2021, were not sufficient for beneficiaries to fully meet their basic needs. As a result of successful advocacy by WFP and partners with the Government to be able to support beneficiaries to fully meet their food and other basic needs, transfer values were increased as of April 2022 to LBP 500,000 per person for food needs and LBP 1 million per household for non-food needs.

### ONE CARD, THREE CASH MODALITIES

**Food e-cards:** LBP 500,000 per person/month. 349,000 Syrian refugees (78,600 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 500,000 per person/month. 440,000 Syrian refugees (77,600 families) and 5,900 refugees of other nationalities (1,700 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 500,000 per person + LBP 1 million per household/month. 232,800 Syrian refugees (35,200 families) use their e-cards to withdraw cash from ATMs and decide how best to meet their essential needs, including food.

**1.1 M  
PEOPLE**

**received cash-based transfers so far in 2022 to meet their food and other basic needs**

**US\$ 2.5  
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.

### **GREATER ACCESS, FOR EVERYONE**

In 2022, additional ATMs were installed and additional shops are being contracted to increase access points for beneficiaries.

Through increased crowd management and monitoring of ATMs, WFP successfully managed to decrease the time of cash withdrawal for beneficiaries by nearly half between December 2021 and April 2022. This helped ensure a safer and more efficient withdrawal process, with higher recorded satisfaction rates of beneficiaries with the assistance.

WFP is expanding to additional redemption points for beneficiaries to redeem their e-card assistance through Money Transfer Operators (MTOs) contracted by WFP's Financial Service Provider. This will allow beneficiaries to redeem their assistance using their e-cards at selected MTOs and will help further reduce crowding at ATMs, as well as reduce transportation costs for beneficiaries amid rising fuel prices.

### **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 2.5 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

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 support from the European Union, WFP is providing Lebanon's most vulnerable families with multi-purpose cash (MPC) assistance that keeps them afloat as life becomes more challenging. Aisha's family was already struggling with money, education, and lack of food, and was further burdened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The cash assistance they received allowed them to pull through the pandemic and meet their needs.

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

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). Through this joint system, 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 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 the 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.

## **World Food Programme**

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