



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lebanon

School Meals Programme

WFP's school meals programme provides nutritious snacks for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee children and encourages them to stay in school

Education has been a critical issue for Syrian refugee children since the start of the refugee crisis. Over half of Syrian refugee children are unable to pursue their primary education due to economic hardships. Meanwhile, more than 100,000 Lebanese students transferred to public schools between 2019 and 2021 due to the economic crisis. With COVID-19-related school closures and the economic crisis, refugee and Lebanese children alike are now facing challenges to access quality education.

WFP's intervention through the school meals programme aims to address the critical issue of limited primary education for Lebanese and Syrian children while preventing short-term hunger and improving children's food consumption.

For this, WFP partnered with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in 2016 to develop a school snacks programme with three components: the provision of nutritious daily school snacks, nutrition education, and health and nutrition summer camps.

THE SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

In coordination with MEHE and cooperating partners, WFP is currently reaching 70,000 refugee and Lebanese students through distribution of school snacks in 115 primary schools across Lebanon.

Participating schools are located in vulnerable communities across the country and typically offer the double-shift system. The morning shift primarily enrolls Lebanese students while the afternoon shift is designed to accommodate Syrian students. By targeting both vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian children, the programme promotes a healthy school environment for all communities.

Fresh, nutritious, and locally-produced snacks every day

The composition of the snack package aims to address dietary diversity and the double burden of malnutrition among targeted students. In addition, parents are relieved from budgeting for their children's lunches, freeing up much-needed financial resources to help meet other needs.

Ensuring quality food for students

To ensure the effectiveness of the programme, the snack distributions are monitored by WFP's partners in collaboration with school health educators, while a third-party company regularly monitors partners' warehouses and end-products to ensure food safety and quality.



Each school day, students receive **fresh fruit in season & a carton of UHT milk** or **baked nuts**



School Kitchens

Through school kitchens, volunteer mothers prepare cold sandwiches made with local products for the students, who also receive a piece of fruit or vegetable. WFP partners purchase fresh produce on a daily basis for mothers to make the sandwiches, ensuring quality nutrition for students throughout the school day. To ensure that no food goes to waste, excess sandwiches and fruits/vegetables are given to students who wish to take them home for them or their families. So far in 2022, a total of 4,700 students were assisted through school kitchens in 6 different schools.



2 sandwiches + fruit/vegetable
(cheese, hummus, or labneh)



given daily for each student through School Kitchens

Summer catch-up programme

As part of the National Learning Recovery initiative, WFP is supporting the Ministry of Education and Higher Education with the summer 'catch-up' programme, providing nutritious snacks to 25,000 participating in the programme. The programme aims to enhance students' preparedness after nearly two years of school closure due to COVID-19 and instability in Lebanon.

MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL SNACK

Whether assistance is delivered through school snacks or school kitchens, WFP's school meals programme acts as a safety net for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee children. A recent evaluation highlighted that the dietary diversity, attendance and retention scores, and the sense of community and belonging of students taking part of the programme, are higher than those in non-assisted schools. School snacks can also contribute to improved food consumption through daily dietary diversity and to overall educational outcomes by increasing students' ability to concentrate at school.

Through school snacks, WFP aims to support children to have better health and nutrition, allowing them to perform better and broaden their educational and future opportunities.

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For the past 2 years, Abir has been the sole provider for her family. As a mother of five, working beside her children in their school kitchen provides her with a special kind of joy. "I don't feel tired by the work as long as my children are near me." One of Abir's motivations for volunteering in the kitchen is seeing how her kids and their friends run to her as she distributes the sandwiches prepared with the other mothers. "We prepare around 900 hummus, cheese, and labneh sandwiches and fruit for 450 students every day. All sandwiches and snacks are prepared with the utmost care, cleanliness, and attention."

Abir is one of ten mothers who volunteer in the kitchen of Haouch el Oumara Mixed Public School in Zahle, Lebanon. The women are provided with a bi-weekly allowance that allows them to support themselves and their families. "My first allowance was used to pay the rent that I couldn't pay before. I also used the money to buy stationary for my children. It is a big responsibility being the sole-provider, but at least now I know that my children's needs will be met and the bills will be paid" says Abir.

Along with the financial benefits for the volunteers, the sandwiches provide students with much-needed energy to study. "Many parents can no longer provide their children with the proper breakfast they need for school, which is why these sandwiches are very important and beneficial to our students," says Micheline Khoury, the school's principal.

2022 AND BEYOND

For the academic year 2022 - 2023, WFP will complete the expansion of the school meals programme to reach 100,000 students with school snacks and meals through school kitchens. Having implemented the school meals programme in fourteen inclusive schools that cater for students with special needs in the current academic year, WFP will target additional inclusive schools for the coming school year.

WFP also held workshops with the Government in 2021 to lay the foundation to conduct the SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results) exercise in 2022.

This will support the Government to establish a national school meals policy and strategy aligned to the 5-year National General Education Plan (2021-2025).

WFP is also supporting the engagement of the Government with the global School Meals Coalition. It is expected that in 2022, Lebanon can join more than 120 member states and partners towards ensuring that every child can receive a healthy and nutritious meal in school by 2030.