

Food and Basic Assistance for Refugees

Over 11 years into the Syrian refugee crisis, WFP's cash assistance remains a lifeline of hope for 1 million refugees in Lebanon



SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lebanon

IN NUMBERS



1.1 million refugees receive monthly cash-based transfers to support their food and other essential needs in 2023



US\$ 2.3 billion injected into the economy since the beginning of WFP's cash-based assistance in 2012

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. WFP has also provided assistance to refugees of other nationalities since 2019.

Today, with almost **90 percent of the 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon living in extreme poverty**, WFP and UNHCR's joint programming is more critical than ever to ensure the food and other essential needs of the most vulnerable are met.

Since the start of the crisis in October 2019, prices in local currency have increased 51 times for food and 15 times for other essential goods and services. As a result, **38 percent of Syrian refugees are estimated to be experiencing acute food insecurity** (Integrated Phase Classification, May 2023) and **75 percent are unable to cover the cost of the household's minimum expenditure basket**.

In coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs, WFP and UNHCR re-initiated dual currency disbursement of cash assistance for Syrian refugees in May 2023, returning to the operational set-up from before the start of the economic crisis in October 2019.

Dual currency redemption has resulted in **significant reductions in crowding, waiting times, and tensions at redemption points**. It also protects assisted families from the depreciation and loss of purchasing power of the local currency. [Read more here](#) and [here](#).

ONE CARD, THREE CASH MODALITIES

The amount of cash received by assisted families and the degree of flexibility in using the e-card varies according to vulnerability. All assisted families receive food assistance, while more vulnerable families receive additional cash assistance for non-food needs.

Food e-cards: US\$ 20 per person/month that can be used to buy food at any of the 300+ 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: US\$ 20 per person/month for food. UNHCR provides US\$ 25 for non-food needs for the same group of assisted families. Recipients can decide to withdraw cash from ATMs, money transfer operators (MTOs), or use the card at any shop, including WFP-contracted shops.

Multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card: US\$ 20 per person/month for food needs + US\$ 25 per household/month to buy other essential needs. Families can choose to withdraw from ATMs or MTOs and decide how best to meet their essential needs, including food.

Assistance is provided for a maximum of 5 members per household for Syrian refugees and 3 members per household for refugees of other nationalities, who generally have smaller households.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE

Cash-based assistance gives families the power and ability to choose the food they want to buy. They can withdraw cash and use it as they see fit, whether for food, shelter, education, medical bills, or anything else they need. WFP has found that **when vulnerable families are given 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 boosts the local economy: **over USD 2.3 billion has been injected into the Lebanese economy** since the beginning of WFP's refugee crisis response.

This in turn provides more livelihood opportunities for Lebanese individuals. 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 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 can access a variety of humanitarian cash assistance through a common card.

ENSURING 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, and an econometric formula to identify and rank refugees by vulnerability. This allows WFP and UNHCR to prioritize finite resources and assistance for the families most in need and helps to ensure that assistance is distributed fairly and equitably.

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.

Feedback and queries from assisted families and community members are received primarily through **the WFP call centre**. Other channels for communication include SMS, outreach volunteers, and community representatives. Individuals who require specialized support (such as health, protection, etc.) are referred to UNHCR and NGO partners.

IMPACT OF ASSISTANCE

WFP uses **Basic Needs Outcome Monitoring (BNOM) to monitor the food security situation** of families receiving WFP assistance.

Between April and June 2023, **6 percent of assisted refugee families reported poor food consumption and 26 percent reported borderline food consumption**. 65 percent of families adopted at least one strategy to cope with food shortage, of which 32 percent adopted severe coping strategies such as skipping meals or reducing meals' size.

Following the introduction of dual currency redemption, **the percentage of households implementing severe livelihood coping strategies decreased significantly**, from 79 percent to 61 percent between April and June 2023. Some of the most implemented strategies include borrowing money to buy food, buying food on credit, and reducing expenditures on health and education.

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



Photo: WFP Photo Library

Hanaa, a 33-year-old woman, came with her husband and 3 children in 2013 from the countryside of Damascus, Syria to Bekaa, Lebanon. Even before the start of Lebanon's economic crisis, meeting basic needs was a challenge for Hanaa's family. Her husband, who suffers injuries from the war, requires medication and regular treatment.

The crisis increased the already heavy burden they had to endure seeking refuge in Lebanon. Meeting the most basic needs has become even more difficult, particularly for their children and their education. Previously receiving WFP's food e-card, Hanaa's family started receiving multipurpose cash assistance in January 2023, allowing them to buy essential food and non-food items.

'Cash assistance gives us choice to prioritize our spending. It's now our support during these difficult times' says Hanaa.

ADAPTING TO A CHALLENGING CONTEXT

WFP has been adapting its programme strategy and delivery in response to financial restrictions and exchange rate fluctuations.

- ❖ **Monthly 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. In May 2023, WFP **reintroduced dual currency disbursement**, resulting in a decrease in waiting time to redeem, fewer technical issues at ATMs, and less crowding and tension at ATMs and MTOs.
- ❖ **Expansion of redemption points:** Additional ATMs were installed and additional shops are being contracted to increase access points for beneficiaries. Since August 2022, branches of local money transfer operators (MTOs) have been added as additional redemption points to reduce travel time and cost for assisted families.

Economic Crisis Response: Food Assistance for Vulnerable Lebanese



SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lebanon

Amid a deep economic crisis and skyrocketing food prices, WFP's in-kind food assistance ensures 300,000 Lebanese residents do not go hungry

IN NUMBERS



800,000 Lebanese (21 percent) are food insecure
IPC analysis, May 2023



51x increase in the price of the WFP food basket (October 2019 – May 2023)

Since 2019, **the ability of Lebanese families to afford adequate food, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable, has been drastically reduced.**

Since the start of the crisis in October 2019, the price of the food basket monitored by WFP in local currency has increased 51 times. Prices of other essential goods and services have meanwhile increased 15-fold. The lifting of subsidies for food, fuel, medicine, and telecommunications between 2021 and 2022 alone caused prices to rise between 200-300 percent.

Today, **800,000 Lebanese are projected to face acute food insecurity** (Integrated Phase Classification, May 2023).

In order to protect the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of the poorest and most vulnerable during this crisis, WFP has provided **unconditional in-kind food assistance to Lebanese families** across the country since 2020.

National social safety nets have scaled up since 2020 to support the most vulnerable Lebanese, including those families who were benefitting from WFP assistance. By July 2023, around **126,200 assisted individuals** (24,300 families) were **transitioned out of WFP assistance into the Government's national safety nets.**

In turn, WFP gradually scaled down the number reached with in-kind food assistance from 400,000 (100,000 families) to 300,000 individuals (75,000 families) each month.

WHY IN-KIND ASSISTANCE?

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, in-kind food was chosen as the transfer modality for WFP's initial crisis response to mitigate the risk that people would not be able to go to shops or ATMs because of lockdown measures.

As COVID restrictions eased, WFP continued providing in-kind food assistance to mitigate the risks of market volatility and ensure people had continued access to food.

In-kind assistance is planned to be maintained both to provide for urgent food needs and to serve as a **strategic contingency measure against any potential shock to the financial system** that would risk the delivery of cash assistance for WFP's other programmes.

A TAILORED FOOD BASKET

Assistance is delivered as a monthly family food ration designed to provide around 61 percent of the total individual energy requirement.

The food ration is delivered to families in 21 kg boxes that currently includes **11 commodities**: rice, pasta, bulgur, lentils, beans, chickpeas, canned tuna, vegetable oil, tomato paste, sugar, and salt.

Starting in September 2023, WFP will introduce locally produced pasta and burghul into the in-kind food parcels to **support the local agrifood economy.**



ENSURING THE RIGHT PEOPLE, EVERYWHERE, ARE REACHED

To reach the most vulnerable Lebanese families across Lebanon, **WFP's cooperating partners collected referrals** directly through their hotlines and local actors (including municipalities and Social Development Centres), NGOs, grassroots movements, and religious charities. A **web-based self-registration form** developed by WFP in 2020 was also used to ensure maximum outreach to vulnerable people who may not have been referred by partners.

To ensure those most in need are reached, WFP employs **household targeting** using food security and economic vulnerability indicators through a questionnaire designed based on the results of the m-VAM survey conducted jointly with the World Bank.

Starting in August 2023, WFP is conducting a retargeting exercise to **reassess the eligibility of targeted families** to receive assistance, aligning with the key criteria of the social safety net programmes.

In addition, WFP launched its **call centre** in July 2021 **to enhance accountability** and provide a direct channel through which families receiving assistance can provide their feedback and concerns, as well as inquire about assistance. WFP also receives through the call centre requests for assistance from vulnerable Lebanese who are not currently enrolled in assistance programmes.

IMPACT OF ASSISTANCE

WFP conducts post-distribution monitoring and qualitative interviews to ensure that distributions go smoothly and to assess beneficiary feedback, preferences, and food security outcomes.

Monitoring results since the implementation of the response in 2020 consistently show a **high satisfaction rate of assisted households** with the quality, quantity, and packaging of food parcels they received.

In June 2023, **79 percent of assisted households had an acceptable food consumption score** up from 55 percent in December 2022. 91 percent of the households adopted moderate to severe strategies, to cope with the shortage of food, such as reducing the number of meals per day and portion sizes and consuming food of lesser quality.

Additionally, 89 percent of households resorted to at least one livelihood coping behaviour, out of which **9 percent resorted to emergency coping strategies** such as begging, compared to less than 3 percent in September 2022. **Assisted families reduced expenses on health and education to free up resources to buy food.**

SAFE AND DIGNIFIED DISTRIBUTIONS

Distributions are staggered to avoid crowding. WFP and partner staff are on the ground at each distribution to ensure the safety and dignity of families receiving assistance. In certain locations and for specific cases, such as individuals with limited mobility, **door-to-door distributions** may also be organized.

When a food parcel delivers hope



For Lina, a mother of six children, this assistance "could not have come at a better time." As food prices are on the rise, "it is difficult to put food on the table, especially with a big family like mine," she says. With six children out of school, Lina finds herself hopeless when it comes to their future, "their life is passing by without education, and we cannot do anything because of the economic situation." However, Lina can rest her mind when it comes to feeding her little ones, "I am relieved from a significant concern now."

For Abdallah, the parcels came at a very critical time as well. With his little girl Lamar, suffering from a severe health condition, the assistance helped a father who can barely keep up with his daughter's medical bills. "I could not be more thankful. The kids were not eating properly anymore because I am not working, so we had to rely on whatever we can get," he says.

The National Poverty Targeting Programme of Lebanon



WFP Lebanon

Lebanon's first poverty targeted social assistance programme



IN NUMBERS



430,000 Lebanese enrolled in the NPTP in 2023



US\$ 20 per person/month for food +
US\$ 25 per HH/month for other essential needs

Established in 2011, the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) is **Lebanon's first poverty-targeted social assistance programme** for the poorest and most vulnerable Lebanese families. The NPTP is implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM).

Inflation led by currency depreciation has been a major driver of increased poverty and food insecurity in Lebanon, resulting in **record-high prices of the food Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB)** and the second nominal food inflation rate in the world in June 2023.

Today, with the economic crisis and lack of adequate social safety nets to cushion the impact of multiple shocks, **800,000 Lebanese are projected to face acute food insecurity** (Integrated Phase Classification, May 2023).

Since 2014, WFP has been supporting the food assistance component of the NPTP, from e-cards restricted to purchasing food at shops contracted by WFP to unrestricted cash redeemable at ATMs and/or shops as of 2021. All assisted families receive US\$ 20 per person/ month for food needs (capped at 6 individuals) and US\$ 25 per household/month for other essential needs. In response to Lebanon's volatile economic context, people receiving NPTP assistance are able to redeem in USD and/or LBP, as of September 2021.

ENHANCING THE NPTP EFFICIENCY TO MEET RISING NEEDS

Due to rising food prices, WFP and MoSA have frequently adjusted the transfer modality and value of NPTP assistance to better meet people's needs.

- ❖ **Increased transfer values to help counter inflation** – from 40,500 LBP in 2020 to 100,000 LBP in 2021 to US\$ 15 per household member in September 2021 with a US\$ 25 household top-up. In line with the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme's benefits, the NPTP transfer value increased in April 2022 from US\$ 15 to US\$ 20 per person per month, while the non-food top-up transfer value remains at US\$ 25.
- ❖ To improve the safety and access to NPTP cash assistance, WFP is **expanding the redemption points** for the NPTP assistance with currently **88 Money Transfer Operators (MTOs)**. While the families can still redeem their assistance at WFP's contracted shops and an expanding network of ATMs, the inclusion of MTOs decreased travel time and costs for assisted people and provided a wider network of redemption points as the programme continues to scale up (see [NPTP MTO Expansion Brief](#)).

Redemption patterns show a clear **preference of beneficiaries for ATM redemption (73%)** and MTO redemption (22%) over shop redemption (1%) and for USD redemption (99%) over Lebanese Pound (LBP) redemption (1%).

SCALING UP THE NPTP

As more and more people fall into poverty, social assistance programmes have continued to scale up. MoSA, together with WFP and PCM, has been significantly scaling up NPTP e-card assistance: with an initial target of 5,000 households in 2014, the NPTP reached its scale-up goal of **75,000 households by the third quarter of 2023** (about 430,000 people).

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

WFP is deepening its capacity strengthening and technical support to ensure the sustainability of NPTP systems and processes.

In March 2023, WFP signed an MOU with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) to strengthen and **develop the Ministry's capabilities to design and operate social safety nets**.

A gender study was conducted by UNWOMEN in collaboration with MoSA and subsequent trainings were held to increase the gender responsiveness of the NPTP (see [NPTP Gender Brief](#)).

WFP **trained more than 500 MoSA social workers on digital data collection tools and data quality control** procedures.

Additionally, in May 2023, WFP and MoSA initiated a project to support the establishment of the Grievance Redress Information System and **set up a call centre operation at MoSA**. The tenders to procure call centre services including the Grievance and Redress Information System (GRIS), hardware, call centre operator/service provider, refurbishment services, and furniture, were launched during the third quarter of 2023 and it is anticipated that the call center operations will start before the end of 2023.

In June 2023, WFP and UNWOMEN signed an MoU that involves conducting regular research to **integrate and evaluate gender equality and social inclusion aspects in the NPTP**.

IMPACT OF NPTP ASSISTANCE

The increase in the amount of NPTP assistance was marked by a **significant rise in the proportion of NPTP households with acceptable food consumption**: 57 percent in Q1 2023 compared to 51 percent in Q4 2022. Between January and March 2023, 43 percent of the Lebanese assisted households had inadequate food consumption.

Eighty-three percent of the assisted households adopted at least one strategy to cope with the shortage of food, such as **buying less expensive food** and **limiting portion size**. **Eighty-eight percent of Lebanese households** adopted at least one coping strategy to meet their essential needs, such as **selling productive assets and reducing expenditure on health**, of which 14 percent resorted to emergency coping strategies, such as **begging**, compared to less than 1 percent in December 2022.

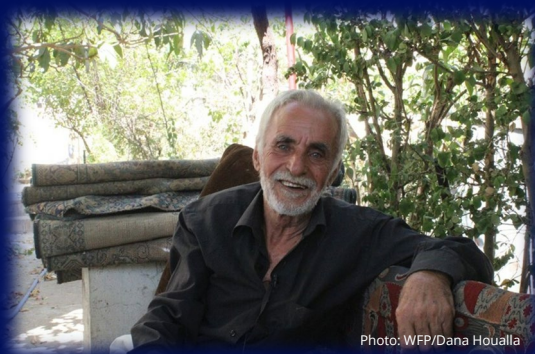
TOWARDS A UNIFIED SOCIAL SAFETY NET SYSTEM

WFP's strategic direction and priorities for the next three years, through the new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2023-2025, focus on ensuring the essential needs of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees and strengthening their resilience at the household and community levels while also **supporting the Government to build sustainable institutions** and systems capable of providing adequate social safety nets against current and future shocks

WFP is working closely with the Government and the World Bank to align the NPTP and the ESSN¹ and support the design of a unified social safety net system under the leadership of MoSA. In February 2023, WFP conducted **due diligence on the NPTP and ESSN** and recommendations from such process highlight that both **programmes shall be gradually and fully unified**.

¹ The ESSN is designed as a shock-responsive social protection assistance that will expand and complement social assistance coverage primarily provided through the NPTP.

The NPTP's main objective is to keep the most vulnerable Lebanese away from hunger



Hasan, who lives in Chtaura, in the Bekaa valley, used to supervise forestation projects but was laid off with no pension. Now in his mid-seventies, he is struggling to make ends meet, and looking for work. "People around town still seek me out for advice on how to plant trees and take care of them", he says. After enduring dire circumstances without a job for nearly four years, in April 2022, Hasan signed up for government-led National Poverty Targeting Programme card which allows him to receive a monthly stipend to pay for household expenses. This card is a lifeline, given that Hasan is the primary caregiver for his wife and two grandchildren.



WFP Lebanon

School Meals Programme

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



SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

IN NUMBERS



700,000 Lebanese and Syrian school-aged children are at risk of not returning to school (UNICEF, 2022)



100,000 students to receive healthy snacks (fresh fruit in season plus UHT milk or baked nuts) or sandwiches locally produced and procured in 2023-2024 school year

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

WFP's intervention through the school meals programme aims to **improve children's food consumption and dietary diversity** and contribute to education outcomes by increasing students' ability to concentrate at school.

Even before the economic crisis that began in 2019, only 30 percent of Lebanese school-aged children attended public schools, and more than half of Syrian refugee children could not pursue their primary education due to economic hardships. Currently, according to UNICEF, almost 700,000 Lebanese and Syrian children are at risk of not returning to school because of rising poverty.

MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL SNACK

At the beginning of 2020, there was almost **an equal number of boys and girls** participating in WFP's school feeding programme, with overall **retention rates for the morning shift of nearly 100 percent and 94 percent for the afternoon shift.**

In June 2022, WFP conducted an assessment with families of students enrolled in the school meals programme, to evaluate the programme's impact on students and families. **99 percent** of the surveyed families wanted the school meals programme to continue and **96.4 percent** reported that their children **enjoy the snacks.** **Forty percent** of the families consider that the school meals **positively impacted the nutrition** and health of their children and **47 percent** reported that the offered school snacks provided them with **financial benefits.**

THE SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME FOR THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

In coordination with MEHE and cooperating partners, WFP **aims to reach 100,000 Lebanese and Syrian students** through the distribution of school snacks in primary schools across Lebanon. During the 2022-2023 academic year, WFP reached **74,800** Lebanese and Syrian **students at 130 public schools** who received snacks and cold meals prepared by **103 women volunteering at eight school kitchens.**

Participating schools are located in vulnerable communities across the country and typically offer a **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.

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.

SCHOOL KITCHENS

Through the school kitchens project established in 2021, women volunteers whose children attend schools that are part of WFP's school meals programme, prepare **cold sandwiches made with local products** for the students, who also receive a piece of fruit or vegetable. In 2023, **11,000 students** were assisted through **8 different school kitchens.**

In March 2023, WFP launched a new **'Satellite School Kitchen' modality**, where existing school kitchens expand the production of cold meals to additional students in nearby schools.

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.

In May 2023, WFP developed a **new digital tracking tool to support schools in monitoring the orders and delivery of snacks** in near-real time. In parallel, WFP launched a pilot in two schools that explores the benefits of decentralization and **direct procurement of cold meal ingredients by the school kitchens through WFP-supported retail shops.**

MEETING THE NEEDS IN 2023 AND BEYOND

As more vulnerable families face challenges maintaining nutritious diets, WFP plans to **scale up its school meals programme** (to reach 155,000 students over the next 3 years) to encourage healthy dietary practices and enrolment, as an increasing number of Syrian families are taking their children out of school.

WFP will also develop a **home-grown school feeding pilot to promote and increase the procurement of fresh, nutritious, locally produced food** – benefiting local farmers, stimulating the local economy, and strengthening local food systems.

SUPPORTING THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT

WFP is supporting the Government of Lebanon and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to **develop a national roadmap for the establishment of a national school feeding programme** aligned with the 5-year National General Education Plan (2021–2025). A critical component of building this national capacity will be to support the Ministry to develop and test cost-effective and sustainable school feeding modalities that can be adopted at a national level.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), WFP launched an assessment in 33 schools to **better understand the children's dietary habits and the perceived impact** of the school meals programme reported by both the students and their parents.

In 2021 and 2022, WFP held workshops with the Government to lay the foundation to conduct the SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results) exercise in 2023. This will support the Government in gathering **systematic and verifiable information about the quality of policies and systems in place** relevant to establishing a national school feeding programme.

WFP also supported **the engagement of the Government with the global School Meals Coalition**. In August 2023, Lebanon joined the coalition of more than 120 member states and partners towards ensuring that every child can receive a healthy and nutritious meal in school by 2030.

Through school snacks, WFP aims to support children to have better health and nutrition, perform better, and broaden their educational and future opportunities. Now, the school kitchens project also provides opportunities for women to gain work experience and provide food for their families.



For the past 2 years, Abir has been the sole provider for her family and now, 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. 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 women who volunteer in the kitchen of Haouch el Oumara Mixed Public School in Zahle, Lebanon. The women receive 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 stationery 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 essential and beneficial to our students,” says Micheline Khoury, the school’s principal.



WFP Lebanon

Building Resilience & Supporting Livelihoods



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

2023 MID-YEAR RESULTS



17,173 vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian Refugees (42% of the CSP plan for 2023) supported with the livelihood assistance programme

Over **12,430** people benefited from Food Assistance for Assets projects



915 smallholder farmers supported through training and market access

755 farmers supported in post-harvest handling through cash incentives of US\$ 300



Food System Challenge Programme:

- **8 SMEs** under cycle 1: positive trade and business balance, over **850 full-time and seasonal jobs**, stable supply chain for over **258 farmers**.

- **8 SMEs** under cycle 2 concluded the implementation of business transformation packages

- **12 new SMEs** under cycle 3 prepared and completed their business transformation packages

Lebanon has been facing a severe economic crisis since 2019, characterized by **hyperinflation, currency devaluation, and unemployment reaching 24 percent by May 2023**, while wages remain stagnant. This has led to widespread poverty and food insecurity, with many Lebanese struggling to afford their basic needs.

Climate change is a risk multiplier to existing development and food security challenges and has been exacerbating problems such as water scarcity, urbanization, and land degradation. **Climate-smart agriculture solutions and measures** will become increasingly crucial for smallholder farmers and producers to withstand better weather and climatic fluctuations such as drought.

WFP'S APPROACH

In partnership with governments, United Nations agencies, NGOs, technical and academic institutions, donors, and communities, WFP plays an important role in bridging humanitarian action with actions that protect, sustain and promote livelihoods within a long-term resilience building framework. These goals are achieved through the following complementary areas of focus:

- **Household, community and public asset rehabilitation and creation for protecting, restoring and promoting livelihoods:** WFP in Lebanon is working with the Ministry of Agriculture, local authorities, and other stakeholders to support the rehabilitation and expansion of vegetation cover by reforestation, afforestation, supporting the water systems and irrigation canals to restore and enhance local agriculture and improve livelihoods.
- **Investments in human capital development:** Capacity strengthening is provided to food-insecure people through the development of technical and vocational skills, business and life skills, financial literacy, nutrition awareness, and more. Technical skills programmes are usually complemented with interventions – such as asset transfers (startup kits), access to finances, market linkages, and job search services to enhance the employability or enterprise viability of targeted beneficiaries.
- **Promoting climate-smart agriculture and post-harvest management:** together with partners, WFP works to increase smallholder adoption of climate-smart agricultural approaches, particularly conservation agriculture, and promotes practices for increased productivity and production. WFP also uses market interventions to help connect farmers to markets thus raising their incomes, such as supporting Medium and Small Enterprises to buy, transform, and market good quality commodities.
- **Local economic recovery:** As part of WFP's efforts to promote private sector development and integration into the food system, WFP supports local businesses and entrepreneurs by offering grants, in-kind support, capacity building, and by linking local food processing businesses to school meals and in-kind programmes.

THE FOOD SYSTEM CHALLENGE

To date, WFP supported **30 Lebanese small and medium businesses** operating in the agriculture and agri-food sectors. These businesses have received cash grants of up to US\$100,000, technical assistance for product and business development, and customized coaching. **Smallholder farmers are then linked up with these businesses** as suppliers of agricultural products, which has resulted in the **creation of over 850 new regular and seasonal employment opportunities** at the business and farmers' levels.

In July 2023, WFP **supported the National Convenor's participation at the UN Food Systems Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment** in Rome, sharing Lebanon's achievements and challenges toward Food System Transformation. WFP Lebanon was the **only country office selected to showcase its achievements** at the summit and presented the various businesses supported by the Food Systems Challenge that is implemented by WFP's partner Berytech.

MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS AND PLANNING

A range of tools are applied to strengthen the design, planning, and implementation of livelihood and resilience building programme including:

- ❖ **Consolidated Livelihoods Exercise for Analysing Resilience** (CLEAR) to understand how climate risks impact food security and livelihoods
- ❖ **Community Based Participatory Planning** (CBPP) to engage communities, partners, and local government in the planning of livelihoods projects
- ❖ **Resilience Building Block** to integrate resilience into programme design and implementation
- ❖ **Crop-type mapping system** to provide evidence for the Ministry of Agriculture on agricultural production and potentially support a strategy for increased local production
- ❖ **Wheat flour fortification** feasibility study and study tour to Jordan

IMPACT OF ASSISTANCE

Based on WFP's Basic Needs Outcome Monitoring surveys, **45 percent** of the participants in livelihood projects had **acceptable food consumption** during the first quarter of 2023. **Eighty-eight percent** of the participants adopted strategies to **cope with the shortage of food**, from which 44 percent adopted severe coping strategies such as skipping meals and limiting portion size. Additionally, **81 percent** of households resorted to severe livelihood coping behaviours, such as **reducing expenses on health and education to free up resources to buy food**.

PARTNERSHIP

In order to maximize benefits for communities and individuals, improve the cost efficiency of the livelihood support programme and promote resilience, WFP has worked with **a wide range of partners**, including government ministries, international and local NGOs, UN agencies, the private sector, financial service providers, technical and academic institutions, and donors and most importantly with communities.

WFP continues to strengthen its **engagement with communities** by placing them at the centre of the planning and implementation of programmes and activities to harness local expertise and knowledge, improve coordination and enhance ownership of the programme's output and outcomes.

WFP's Resilience and Livelihood assistance programmes are further augmented by partnerships with other United Nations organisations. **FAO, IFAD and WFP** are partnering through joint programmes and funding arrangements to improve the livelihoods and build long-term resilience of beneficiaries and communities.

WFP also engages with **AUB and other research institutions** in a dynamic collaboration to improve the effectiveness, advance the operational and technical capacity and generate evidence and influence policy decisions.

OUTLOOK 2023 AND BEYOND

In 2023 WFP aims to **identify points of integration across different programmes** and interventions both with other WFP supported programmes and programmes of other agencies and stakeholders. The following diagram is a typical illustration of consideration for layering programmatic activities for an integrated resilience building programme that can be mutually exclusive but in the meantime feed into other pillars.

