



WFP & Social Protection Lebanon case study

WFP is working with the government of Lebanon to strengthen Lebanon’s social protection system, using experience from supporting Syrian refugees.

Background

At the start of the Syrian crisis, it was estimated that 27 percent of the Lebanese population – around one million people – were poor, living on less than US\$ 4 a day, and 8 percent–300,000 people–were extremely poor, living on less than US\$ 2.4 a day.

Through the [National Poverty Targeting Programme \(NPTP\)](#), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) has placed poverty alleviation as a main priority; Lebanon’s first poverty-targeted social assistance programme. The objective of the NPTP was to provide social assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable Lebanese households based on transparent criteria that assess each household’s eligibility to receive assistance, given the available public resources.

In 2014, the provision of food assistance to vulnerable families was introduced to the NPTP.

Interventions

WFP contributes to the NPTP, providing both a [transfer mechanism](#) – the same e-card system used in WFP’s Syrian refugee response – and [financial support](#) for those cards, consistently since mid-2016. That cash is used each month by e-card holders to purchase food from any of WFP’s 500 contracted shops across Lebanon.

To determine eligibility for NPTP assistance, households are ranked on a poverty scale that uses 62 indicators and a welfare score computation. An additional questionnaire and home visit – using a proxy means test methodology – are used to rank

households by their welfare, looking at health and education, quality of household’s dwelling, ownership of durable goods, demographic structure and occupations of adults.

The content of both the application and the questionnaire are checked regionally and then centrally at the MoSA Central Unit. Data is then sent to the Central Management Unit at the Presidency of Council of Ministers for national validation against other governmental databases and calculation of welfare scores.

In 2017, WFP is providing monthly food assistance to the Government’s NPTP for 53,000 of the most vulnerable Lebanese.



Key achievements

As a result of the provision of food assistance there has been an [improvement in the food security of 53,000 vulnerable Lebanese](#) targeted for assistance. The average food consumption score has increased by 33 percent and remained stable since the introduction of the food assistance. Moreover, dietary diversity has improved, and participating households are 63 percent less likely to resort to negative coping strategies compared to the baseline.

WFP's work with the Government of Lebanon has also helped [strengthen the social protection system](#). Through this collaboration, WFP has supported the capacity development of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the areas of e-card distribution, communication with beneficiaries, e-card management systems, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, beneficiary data management and risk mitigation.

Next steps

As part of the commitment to assist the Government of Lebanon in the humanitarian response as well addressing its development needs, WFP aims to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building.

WFP's corporate [digital beneficiary and transfer management platform SCOPE](#) will be made available to support the government in beneficiary management for the national safety net and in graduating beneficiaries through participation in digital skills vocational training. The introduction of a beneficiary management and transfer tool would support the development of a comprehensive safety net system and ability to link to other types of social assistance.

WFP also plans to provide further support in [vulnerability assessment, targeting and impact monitoring](#) which builds on the use of digital data collection at the household level .

Lessons learned

Over the last few years, the scope and reach of the NPTP has expanded significantly. Notwithstanding, a number of gap areas need to be addressed to ensure that the government is able to deliver an effective and efficient safety net programmes.

- The cash-based assistance component of the NPTP represents a new element in Lebanon's system of safety nets and social assistance. It requires the government to develop a clear vision for the Lebanese social safety nets system. The vision should pave the way for a NPTP strategy and other safety nets that could be established under the umbrella of the NPTP. Such vision would also help frame the linkages between the different safety nets and other existing contributory schemes.
- A clear vision would inform social policies that could lead to the development of either additional safety net programmes or a reform of existing programmes. The vision would need to include robust infrastructure to allow for the development and/or expansion of safety net programmes.
- In order to support a comprehensive system, a national coordination structure should be put in place to harmonize the efforts on social protection across ministries, UN organizations and other stakeholders.
- Strengthening of capacities of social workers, to ensure proper targeting and efficient allocation of funds, has been identified as crucial for the NPTP.

Further reading

WFP (2017). *Lebanon Country Strategic Plan (2018-2020)*. Available at: wfp.org/countries/lebanon



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