



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Palestine Country Brief October 2020

In Numbers



338,981 people assisted
In October 2020

US\$3.7 m cash-based transfers made

364 mt of food distributed

US\$28.1 m six months (Nov 2020 – April 2021) net funding requirements

Operational Context

The outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis in Palestine has exacerbated the deteriorating health and socio-economic conditions of Palestinians, particularly the most vulnerable groups, including elderly people, persons with disabilities, woman-headed households and children. Restrictive measures forced thousands of Palestinians out of their work, significantly impacting their livelihoods. The World Bank projects a year GDP decline of at least 7.6 percent and up to 11 percent due to restrictions related to COVID-19. Coupled with the rise in unemployment, poverty will increase in the West Bank from 14 percent to 30 percent and in Gaza from 53 percent to 64 percent. A UN Women report shows that a staggering 95 percent of women-owned businesses are negatively impacted by COVID-19, and 27 women-owned businesses have already shut down.

Prior to COVID-19, the humanitarian context in Palestine has been directly tied to the impact of the Israeli occupation. Restricted movement of people, access to resources and basic social services, together with recurrent expropriation of land, settler violence and periodic armed hostilities have resulted in economic stagnation, high unemployment, poverty and food insecurity. The prolonged conflict has disproportionately affected women, men, girls and boys. Women headed households represent 11 percent of the total households in Palestine, but account to almost 20 percent of families suffering from extreme poverty. Adolescent boys and girls living in poverty have lower access to quality services.

WFP regularly provides food assistance to the most vulnerable food insecure groups of the Palestinian non-refugee population. Since May, WFP scaled up food assistance to meet the needs of additional vulnerable non-refugees who have been affected by COVID-19. The majority of the targeted families are headed by women, with elderly people, persons with disabilities and high ratio of dependents. Already before the outbreak of COVID-19, the food insecurity in Palestine affected nearly a third of the population – about 1.7 million people – and is driven by high poverty and unemployment rates. The number of food-insecure Palestinians is almost equally divided between the refugee (55%) and non-refugee (45%) communities. More than 700,000 non-refugees are assessed to be food insecure in Palestine, 465,000 in Gaza and 235,000 in the West Bank.

Under 2018-22 Country Strategic Plan (CSP), WFP aims at providing food assistance to 426,000 of the most vulnerable non-refugees via in-kind food rations and electronic food vouchers. Assisted communities can redeem their entitlements in a network of 335 local retail shops across Palestine. The provision of WFP's assistance goes beyond enhancing people's ability to meet their immediate food needs; it supports community resilience in the face of repeated shocks and increased hardships, contributes to maintaining peace and stability, and stimulates the local economy. WFP also works with national institutions to enhance the capacity of existing social safety nets to assist the poor and vulnerable.

Population: **4.9 million**

2019 Human Development Index: 110
out of 189

Poverty rate: 29.2 per cent

Severe and moderate malnutrition: 7.4
% of children between 6-59 months

Operational Updates

In October, WFP provided food assistance through Cash Based Transfers (CBT) in the form of electronic food vouchers to 333,074 poor and severely food insecure Palestinians. Among the CBT recipients 57,557 are affected by COVID-19 and the majority of which (99 percent) reside in the West Bank where the impact of job loss linked to anti-COVID-19 closures and lockdowns was most pronounced.

- Every household received a monthly credit of USD 10.3 per capita on a magnetic card to purchase food of their choice at 335 local retailers across Gaza (200) and the West Bank. While meeting a share of the families daily food and nutrition needs, WFP's CBT programme supports the local economy by injecting much needed cash into the market (USD 4 million per month) and strengthens the resilience of small holders in the face of mounting socio-economic hardships. The CBT assistance included 254 families (1,600 people) who live in H2 area of Hebron City in the southern West Bank. Here the assistance is provided alongside Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) activities which are targeting mothers, pregnant and lactating women. WFP shared messages and managed discussions through Whatsapp sessions on detection and prevention of breast cancer.
- While WFP continues prioritizing sustaining food assistance to the pre-COVID-19 targeted households in Gaza and the West Bank, WFP is preparing to further scaling up assistance to people newly affected by COVID-19. WFP will provide in November CBTs to around 30,000 new affected people in the Gaza strip to help in alleviating the impact of anti-pandemic restrictive measures on their fragile livelihoods. Furthermore,
- WFP will launch its pilot Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance to 1,000 of the poorest families in Gaza in the second week of November. Targeted families will receive cash assistance which gives them a choice to purchase what they need most at local markets. This assistance will be piloted thanks to financial support from ECHO, Switzerland and the UK.

Photo: Nedaa` and her husband Ismail checking their plants at Beit Fajjar village in northern Bethlehem in the West Bank. The family received wicking beds under WFP's resilience strengthening project which provides climate-smart agricultural assets and training to vulnerable families, particularly women-headed, to improve their dietary intake and generate income. (WFP/ Elias Halabi)

WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food (SDG 2)

Strategic Outcome # 1: Non-refugees, poor and severely food-insecure people have improved dietary diversity by 2022

Focus area : Crisis response

Activities: - Provision of unconditional food assistance – including through cash-based transfers (CBT) and in-kind modalities- and nutrition information to poor and food-insecure households.

Strategic Result 2: Support to the implementation of the SDGs (SDG 17)

Strategic Outcome 2: State of Palestine institutions have enhanced capacities and systems to identify, target and assist food-insecure vulnerable populations by 2022

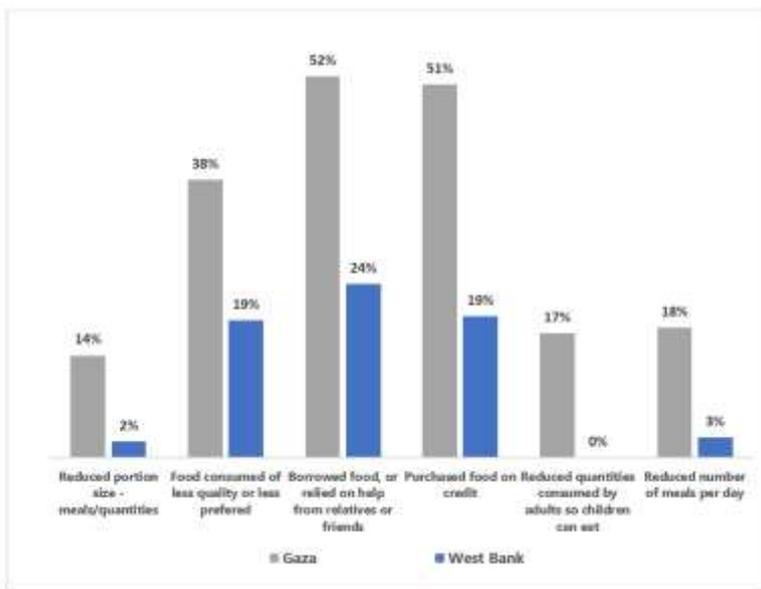
Focus area : Resilience-building

Activities: Technical support to national ministries and institutions on food security strategy; Provision of a CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government

| Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022) | | Funding Requirements |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Total Requirements (USD) | | Allocated Contributions (USD) |
| 291 m | | 147 m |
| 2020 Requirements (USD) | 2021 Requirements (USD) | Six Month Net Funding Requirements (USD) (November 2020- April 2021) |
| 71 m | 48 m | 28.1 m |

Monitoring

- Throughout the month of October, WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls.
- Beneficiary sample: 181 interviews and 364 interviews with beneficiary households in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip respectively. 26 percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and 15 percent have at least one member with special needs.
- Findings show that the **Food Consumption Score (FCS)** of 77 percent of sampled beneficiary households **in Gaza** was acceptable, 19 percent borderline and 4 percent poor. **In the West Bank**, 69 percent of the sampled beneficiary households had acceptable FCS, 22 percent borderline and 9 percent poor.
- Many families, particularly in Gaza, continued using **negative mechanisms** to cope with their incapability to fully meet their food needs. More than half of the surveyed families purchased food on credit (51 percent) and borrowed food or relied on help from relatives or friends (52 percent). Many families consumed food of less quality (38), and food of less quantity (17 percent). In the West Bank, 24 percent borrowed food or relied on help from relatives or friends, and 19 percent purchased food on credit and consumed food less quality.
- Almost **all interviewed households expressed their satisfaction with the quality (98 percent) and availability and variety of commodities (99 percent) in the CBT participating shops** and considered the voucher value as essential in supporting their livelihoods.



Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP has averted imminent cuts in assistance anticipated as early as November to 335,000 CBT beneficiaries** thanks to donor funding and an internal loan through WFP corporate budget.
- With additional donor funding, food assistance to 335,000 recipients of CBTs will continue until mid-December and with the internal corporate loan until the end of January.
- WFP has been able to respond to new food needs largely due to COVID-19 through two internal loans, in May and October. The total USD 10.3 million need to be repaid.
- WFP needs an additional USD 28.1 million to be able to continue providing food assistance in the next six months to all targeted vulnerable non-refugees.** The targeted non-refugees include 346,000 people who regularly receive WFP food assistance, 65,000 people affected by COVID-19 that WFP started assisting in May, and up to new 50,000 affected people by the current spike in positive cases in Gaza. in Gaza.

Partnerships

- WFP is supporting the national Social Protection System by providing complementary food assistance to most vulnerable non-refugee communities enrolled in the National Safety Nets programme. Also, WFP is helping the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to respond to emerging food needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- WFP continues providing its CBT platform to a wide range of humanitarian actors to provide a variety of assistance to affected people. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, WFP opened its platform to UNICEF, UNRWA, UNFPA, INGO Islamic Relief Worldwide, INGO Action Against Hunger and INGO Terre des Hommes.
- With financial support from the UN's Joint Sustainable Development Goal Fund, WFP, along with UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO), continue working with the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to enhance the social protection system so that it is more inclusive and accessible to older people, and persons with disabilities, particularly women. See [a story](#) of Falha (65) from Jericho City and how important for poor elderly people like her to to enjoy their right for tailored services so that they may lead long, healthy lives in security and dignity. WFP is partnering with Oxfam in Gaza and the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) to implement climate-smart agricultural resilience strengthening activities which aim at improving targeted families' dietary intake and for income generation.

2020 Donors: Canada, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, ECHO, UK, UN Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1). SDG Fund (Strategic Outcome 2). More information [here](#).

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