

COUNTRY STRATEGY

In response to the Syria refugee crisis, WFP launched a Regional Emergency Operation (200433) in July 2012. Under the programme, WFP Lebanon provides food assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees through e-cards, one-off in-kind food parcels to new arrivals from Syria and cash transfers to Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS).

In line with the Government-endorsed inter-agency Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016, WFP is seeking to move to resilience-based interventions beyond 2015. WFP will also seek for greater cost efficiency and effectiveness through refined targeting to reach the most vulnerable registered Syrian refugees.

WFP re-established a presence in Lebanon in 2012 after having left in 1997. An emergency operation was also carried out during the 2006 war.



WFP/Sandy Maroun

OPERATIONS

| | Project Duration | Planned number of people | Total requirements (in USD) | Total received (in USD) | Total Funded (%) | 6 Months Net Funding Requirements (in USD)* | Top 5 Donors |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---|---|
| EMOP 200433: Food Assistance to Vulnerable Syrian Populations in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt affected by the events in Syria (Lebanon component) | July 2012 - December 2015 | 761,648 | 990,569,798 | 367,259,690 | 63% | 154,379,481 | Germany, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, multilaterals, the United Kingdom and the United States |

*May-October

Summary of WFP assistance: In June 2012, following an official request from the Government, WFP started its operations to respond to the Syria crisis which led thousands of Syrian families to flee to Lebanon, resulting in significant humanitarian needs in the country.

Through the Regional Emergency Operation (EMOP) 200433, WFP provides food assistance to those that cannot meet their basic food needs through various modalities. Electronic vouchers (e-cards) are provided to vulnerable Syrian refugees and one-off food parcels to new arrivals awaiting registration. Each food parcel contains 13 different commodities that cover the basic needs of a family for one month. In addition, food assistance is also being provided through cash transfers to half of the caseload of the UNRWA Palestinian refugees from Syria through cash machine cards.

E-cards are WFP's principal means of assistance to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, accounting for over 97 percent of monthly caseloads. Each month, around 75 percent of UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees receive individual rations which can be exchanged for food of their choice in any of the 410 WFP-contracted shops across the country. E-cards were adopted as the primary modality of assistance in Lebanon as the local market is capable of providing sufficient food for the host and refugee populations alike, eliminating the need to import large food quantities. Additionally, they enable beneficiaries to choose their preferred foods, allowing them to meet their consumption and nutritional needs effectively.

Lebanon's population has grown by around 25 percent as a result of the influx of Syrian refugees, placing a huge strain on host communities - struggling to meet their own food needs. In 2015, WFP is supporting the Government to strengthen its social safety net programme, which provides food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese populations affected by the Syria crisis. Under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) 2015-2016, WFP is also working closely with FAO and other partners to explore resilience and livelihood assistance to vulnerable host communities to help ease some of the strain.

WFP Lebanon's operation is in line with WFP's Strategic Objective 1 to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies as well as to Millennium Development Goal 1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

| ACHIEVEMENTS | ISSUES/CHALLENGES |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the first quarter of 2015, WFP provided food assistance to over 950,000 Syrian refugees and Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS). Beneficiaries were reached through e-cards (97 percent of the assistance), in-kind food parcels, e-cards to use in any of the 410 WFP-contracted shops, and ATM cards. In addition, WFP continued to provide capacity building support to the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP). The NPTP is a social safety net programme to assist vulnerable Lebanese affected by the Syria crisis and managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Presidency of Council of Ministers. Around 27,000 vulnerable Lebanese individuals received monthly food assistance through the e-cards which can be used at WFP shops. WFP, in collaboration with cooperating partners, conducted a validation exercise to verify e-cards distributed to targeted Syrian refugees. Some 74 percent of households (131,495) successfully completed the process. During the reporting period, Budget Revision 15 was under draft (approved in April) – which modified Lebanon’s programme under the regional EMOP. The two major addition are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Including food assistance to the most vulnerable host communities in Lebanon reaching 27,209 beneficiaries between April and July 2015. Transition of the in-kind assistance for newly arrived Syrian refugees in Lebanon to a one off e-card assistance, with the opportunity to expand the assistance to unforeseen emergencies including refugees affected by weather conditions, evictions and displacements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding shortages continue to pose a significant challenge for the continuity of WFP’s operations. Due to the funding shortfalls, e-cards have been loaded with reduced value of USD 19 per person per month as opposed to USD 27, 70 percent of regular entitlements. With continued funding limitations in a protracted crisis situation, WFP started a targeting exercise to identify the most vulnerable refugees who require food assistance. Findings from focus group discussions and preliminary post-distribution monitoring findings indicate that, in the period following the voucher value reduction, around 80 percent of the people have adopted negative coping mechanisms such as taking out loans to fulfil food needs. In addition, 14 percent of the families reported to have pulled their children out of school and four percent to be sending them to work. Further prolonging of reduced assistance is expected to worsen the vulnerabilities of beneficiaries and worsen tensions with host communities. For more details, see factsheet on impact of cuts.¹ Fluid security situations in Lebanon, notably in areas bordering Syria impacted WFP’s ability to access some areas in the Bekaa Valley, including Aarsal. However, despite access challenges, WFP operations remain robust. In northern Lebanon, WFP continues to struggle to gain access to Wadi Khaled area. As shop monitoring has been challenging, WFP instituted specific restrictions on transactions in shops including setting a monthly redemption ceiling. |

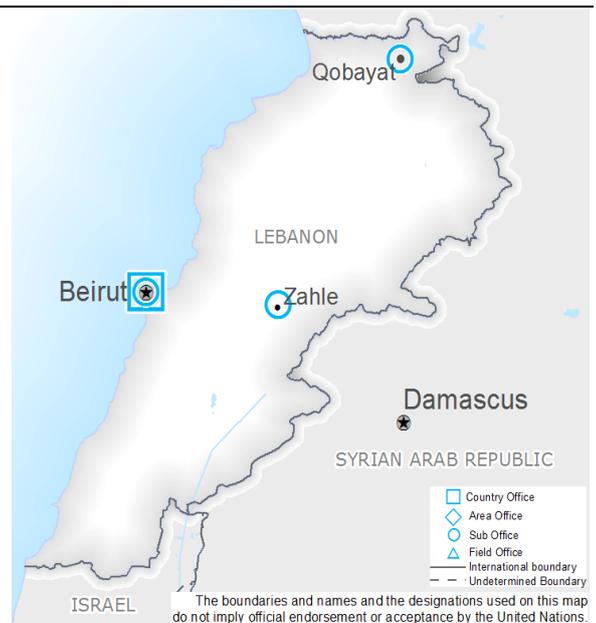
PARTNERSHIPS

In Lebanon, WFP works with 12 cooperating partners, implementing food assistance programmes and/or supporting field level data collection. In addition, WFP developed an agreement with UNRWA for the implementation of food assistance to PRS. This partnership has been key in expanding the assistance to refugees beyond the Syrian refugees. Through this partnership, WFP has provided technical support in developing monitoring and evaluation tools and systems. Furthermore, WFP started exploring new partnership opportunities with academic institutions in Lebanon for joint research projects and possible internship programmes. WFP co-leads the food security sector working group with the Government of Lebanon, an NGO (on a rotational basis) and FAO. WFP also co-leads the nutrition sub-working group with UNICEF and UNHCR.

COUNTRY BACKGROUND

With an estimated population of 4.4 million Lebanon is classified as an upper middle-income country. Lebanon continues to show progress in each of the 2014 Human Development Index (HDI) indicators. The HDI value is 0.765 – in the high human development category – positioning the country at 65 out of 187 countries and territories. In addition, reaching gender parity in enrolment at primary, middle and secondary school levels, reducing the maternal mortality rate, increasing the rate of births attended by health professionals and expanding the use of birth control methods all reflect improvements in the areas of health and gender. Lebanon achieved some success in meeting the Millennium Development Goals since 2000. Over recent years, the life expectancy at birth has also increased to 72.8 percent.

As of March 2015, over 1.1 million Syrians have registered with UNHCR and this records the world’s highest per capita concentration of refugees. The massive influx of refugees has been placing significant strain on existing government resources and host communities. The World Bank estimated that by the end of 2014, the Syrian conflict would have cut real GDP growth by 2.9 percentage points, entailing large losses in terms of wages, profits, taxes, or private consumption and investment. It is estimated that this will push approximately 170,000 Lebanese into poverty and double the unemployment rate to above 20 percent. With continued conflicts in Syria and the rise of extremist armed groups, Lebanon has witnessed growing tensions in its territory. As extremist groups crossed the Lebanese-Syrian border clashes erupted between the Lebanese army and the extremist groups, temporarily displacing refugees and host communities and heightening concerns around national security.



¹ <http://cdn.wfp.org/syriainfo/lebanon.html>