

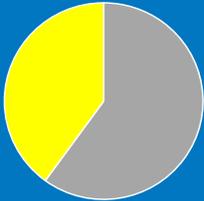


March UPDATE

- March developments
- Household Visits and Basic Assistance
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FUNDING



Agencies and the Government of Lebanon have requested US\$ 2.48 billion in the 2016 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)

REGISTERED REFUGEES

A total of 1,055,984 individuals are currently registered with UNHCR in Lebanon

LEBANON

INTER-AGENCY UPDATE

MARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Winter distributions: update

Over 182,364 Syrian and Palestinian refugee families and vulnerable Lebanese families received cash for winter assistance or fuel vouchers since the beginning of winter. Additionally, over 70,000 families (350,000 individuals) have received in-kind core relief items such as clothes, stoves, and blankets.

Cash assistance: impact

The Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC) launched the results of two research studies regarding the impact of multi-purpose cash assistance (MCAP) on Syrian refugees, including children. The main findings indicate that families receiving MCAP are less prone to relying on debt to pay for rent and generally have less children dropping out of school and/or engaging in child labour. Vulnerable households not receiving MCAP were reported to be 1.8 times more reliant on debt to pay their rent.

Overall, the studies portray the positive impact of MCAP on vulnerable families in terms of enhancing their ability to cope with challenging economic and psychosocial circumstances.

WFP's new school meals programme

The World Food Programme (WFP) launched its new school meals programme in Lebanon. Through the small-scale activity, WFP is providing 10,000 Lebanese and Syrian pupils in 13 double shift public schools with a snack four times a week. The project was born out of WFP's intention to look further into resilience-focused activities within its response to the Syria crisis inside Lebanon. The longer refugees stay in Lebanon, the greater the impact is on children's education. The snack acts as an incentive to enroll children and remain in school: the first objective of the programme. The selected schools are located in the most vulnerable communities across Lebanon as identified by UNICEF and UNHCR and was carried out in close coordination with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).

The snack packages were developed after consultation with in-house nutritionists and consist of one tetra pack of UHT milk, one dry snack (such as thyme bread or a muffin) and one piece of fruit or juice. As the second objective of the programme is to improve the micronutrient consumption of the pupils, the snacks are tailored to amount to around 400 calories with no more than 30 percent of fat. They are low in refined sugars and salt and are free from trans-fats.

Education: update

Homework support activities for Syrian refugee children continue across Lebanon through partner agencies, Syrian refugees who have received DAFI scholarship for higher education, Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs) and Parent Committee Groups (PCG). PCGs are groups of parents who meet to support the education of their children and challenges they face. Together they try to find solutions to common problems, such as transportation to school.

Some 95 homework support groups reaching over 1,400 students were established and PCGs are working to support information-sharing and setting up a feedback mechanism.

The British Council and UNHCR are conducting a pilot project to boost the capacities of 13 homework support facilitators, including DAFI students and volunteers, in Mount Lebanon.

Institutional Support and Social Cohesion

UNESCO and Caritas Lebanon inaugurated a Community Development Centre (CDC) in Qobayat in Akkar, Northern Lebanon. Equipped with a library and a computer lab, the CDC gives access to refugees and host communities to a wide range of educational tools and resources, including work and study spaces and books. The centre aims at reducing tensions and encouraging socialization between refugees and Lebanese communities.

Increased healthcare coverage

UNHCR hospital coverage has been increased to 90 per cent for neonatal and pediatric intensive care admissions and patients with severe burns since 18 March 2016. This is an addition to the 90 per cent coverage currently extended to all refugees assessed as being severely vulnerable. Coverage for all other conditions will remain at 75 per cent. This positive change in policy will provide an extended safety net to the most vulnerable and those facing very high medical expenses.

A National HazMat team is formed

The World Health organization (WHO) trained Lebanese healthcare personnel on the medical management of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) hazards, in addition to public health measures required to manage such risks. Such capacity building is required as part of the International Health Regulations (IHR).

A decision was taken by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) with the support of WHO to create a National Hazardous Materials (HazMat) medical team to effectively play its role and responsibilities as a member in the Lebanese National CBRN team launched by Prime Minister Tammam Salam, with the European CBRN Center of Excellence.

The overall goal of the project was to improve the preparedness and response capacities of MoPH to deal with any potential threats generated from hazard incidents including chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological materials.

Thirteen training sessions were conducted for 242 participants from the Civil Defense, the HazMat Medical Team and the Lebanese Red Cross. The objectives of the trainings were to: create a multisectorial HaZmat team with different disciplines at the national level to face any CBRN event in Lebanon, ready to respond to CBRN hazards exposures 24/7. In addition to the advanced training, WHO provided advanced level of personal protective equipment for the HaZmat team.



Participants in action during the simulation training sessions. (Photo credit: WHO © Assaf/D.)

Environment and Innovation

UNHCR is in the process of setting up a number of “vertical gardens” – gardens which take minimal space and can be used to grow relatively small quantities of food to supplement people’s diets - in the most sub-standard dwellings in cities and villages of Lebanon.

The gardens will help Syrian and Lebanese families grow nutritious fruits and vegetables of their choice in their homes. While community participation is voluntary, the project capitalizes on the energy of youth (15-24 year olds) and their commitment.

The structures of the vertical garden are lightweight and are designed in such a way that can be easily replicated and expanded by refugees and local communities by using the resources they have available such as plastic bottles, and jars.

HOUSEHOLD VISITS AND BASIC ASSISTANCE

Studying the needs and living conditions of vulnerable communities in Lebanon is at the heart of humanitarian response. Vulnerability assessments are conducted to identify and gauge the effects of dwindling economic resources.

The 2015 annual Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR)¹ in Lebanon indicated that an estimated 70 per cent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live below the national poverty line of US\$ 3.84 per day, an increase from 49 per cent in 2014. The study also indicates that 52 per cent of the registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon are deemed severely economically vulnerable – a sharp increase from 26 per cent the year before. These families live on less than US\$ 435 per family per month, just at the minimum threshold to survive in Lebanon. Overall, the socio-economic situation of Syrian refugees deteriorated significantly in 2015 compared to 2014.

Building on the VASyR assessment methodology, an inter-agency process was initiated in 2014 to profile socio-economic vulnerabilities and vulnerability to food insecurity through household visits. A country-wide multi-sectoral questionnaire has been developed and used by agencies involved in direct assistance (food and non-food items). The massive scale of needs and the limited resources necessitated adopting a targeting approach to make sure assistance is given to the neediest families.

Through the household visits and the questionnaire, families are assessed on their general vulnerability levels (through gauging household expenditures, access and use of services, shelter conditions, coping strategies, etc.), and main needs. In addition, the visits help aid agencies keep regular contact with refugees and serve as an opportunity to provide information to families on available services. Household visits represent a strong tool to collect real-time information and allows sketching trends on the daily life of Syrian refugees.

Refugee families with limited financial resources who are not able to meet their basic needs are defined as economically vulnerable. The Basic Assistance sector, one of the nine sectors working under the umbrella of the 'Lebanon Crisis Response Plan' (LCRP), is the sector that helps refugees address the gap between their limited income and their minimum survival expenditures. It helps them cover their most basic daily expenses - with the exception of food needs - through the provision of cash and in-kind assistance. Basic assistance aims to prevent economically vulnerable families from slipping deeper into poverty. The sector applies a specific targeting approach as a way to prioritize limited resources and reach out to those who are most vulnerable.

The Basic Assistance sector relies on those visits to identify families eligible to receive assistance. Cash assistance is a cost-effective programme that targets economically-vulnerable families to help them address their most urgent needs. These programmes also help stimulate local markets. Over 37,000 of the most vulnerable refugee families receive US\$ 175 per month through an ATM card. It is

¹ Please see the December 2015 inter-agency update for more information.

worth mentioning that this number increased from 6,000 families prior the introduction of the visits as a targeting model. Despite these efforts, only 16 per cent of the total registered Syrian refugee population in Lebanon receive cash assistance, due to funding limitations, against 52 per cent deemed to be severely vulnerable.

Since December 2014, some 25 agencies profiled over half the registered Syrian refugee population – close to 10,000 visits per month. By March 2015, more than 140,000 families have had their economic vulnerability profiled. Every month, some 1,300 additional vulnerable families are enrolled in cash assistance programmes by different partners such as members of the Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC), Relief International, Caritas and UNHCR.

MOHAMMAD'S STORY



UNHCR© / S. Hoibak

Mohammad and his wife Shams arrived to Lebanon in 2014 with their five sons. In Syria, Mohammad owned cattle, which he left behind when he fled the war. Today, he lives in an abandoned chicken farm in North Lebanon.

Two of their sons, Khaled – 16 years old and Ali – 6 years old are profoundly deaf. Because of their disability, they were missing out on school and faced difficulties in communicating with other children. The children were provided with medicine and hearing aid as a result of interagency referrals. Through the regular home visits agencies conduct to identify needs and provide families with information on available services, Mohammad's family has been assessed as severely vulnerable as they were living on less than the minimum survival amount needed per month. They were therefore determined eligible to receive multipurpose cash assistance which they critically needed to survive.

"We are using part of the cash assistance to buy food", his wife, Shams said. "But our needs are so many that there is only so much we can do with the amount we get."

In the past months, the family used the cash for various purposes including to pay rent and electricity as well as to buy food and medication. "This is the third month we receive cash assistance. We use it every time depending on our needs", Shams added.

Agencies that conduct household visits

Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique Et au Développement (ACTED), Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (AVSI), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC), Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP), Docras, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Handicap International (HI), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), INTERSOS, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Makhzoumi Foundation, Medair, Mercy Corps, Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM), Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale (PU-AMI), Restart, Relief International (RI), Save the Children, SHEILD, Secours Islamique France (SIF), Solidar Suisse, Solidarités International, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision (WVI).

DONORS

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxemburg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America.

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