



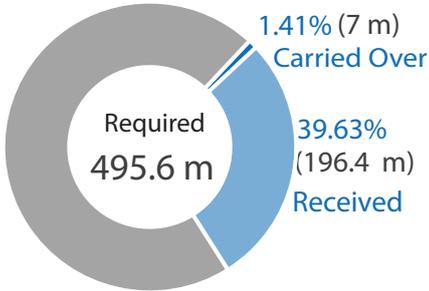
Basic Assistance End Year 2020 Dashboard



**Inter-Agency
Coordination
Lebanon**

The end year dashboard summarizes the progress made by partners involved in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and highlights trends affecting people in need. The Basic Assistance Sector in Lebanon is working to: **OUTCOME 1)** Strengthen the ability of vulnerable households, including female-headed, to meet their basic survival needs; **OUTCOME 2)** Ensure that in-kind assistance in support of populations affected by seasonal hazards and emergencies is provided; **OUTCOME 3):** Support the National Poverty Targeting Programme.

2020 Funding Status in USD as of 31 December 2020



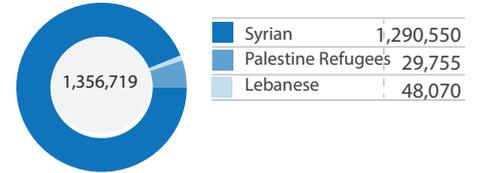
Programmes are funded by a combination of flexible/unearmarked funds and funds specifically earmarked to the sector

Targeted Population groups

1,530,936 m
(People in Need)



Population reached by cohort

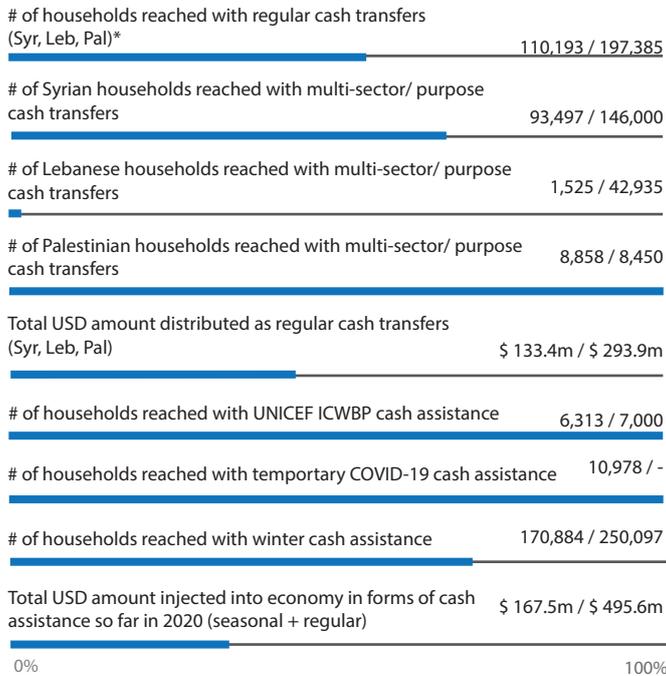


Progress against targets



Key Achievements

reached / target



* Includes UNICEF child focused cash transfer



Outcomes

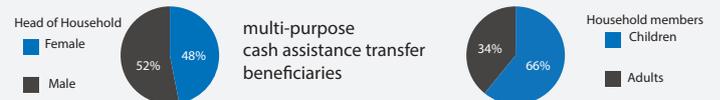
	LCRP 2017/2020 Baseline				Dec 2020 Current				2020 Target			
	SYR	LEB	PRS	PRL	SYR	LEB	PRS	PRL	SYR	LEB	PRS	PRL
OUTCOME 1: % population that is severely vulnerable	53%	10%	89%	-	55%	65%	89%	22%	55%	10%	89%	65%
% of assisted severely economically vulnerable households report being able to meet their basic survival needs	90%	-	90%	-	20% ¹	69%	-	-	90%	-	90%	-
OUTCOME 2: % of assisted households affected by seasonal shocks who are able to meet their additional basic survival needs	90%	-	-	-	25% ²	-	-	-	100%	100%	100%	100%
OUTCOME 3: National Social Safety Net Strategy endorsed	No				No				Yes			

¹ UNHCR Multipurpose cash assistance programme, Outcome Monitoring, September 2020

² UNHCR Winter Cash Assistance Programme 2020-2021, Post Distribution Monitoring



Age/Gender Breakdown of MPCA (SYR) Beneficiaries



Analysis

Syrian Households Receiving Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) in 2020



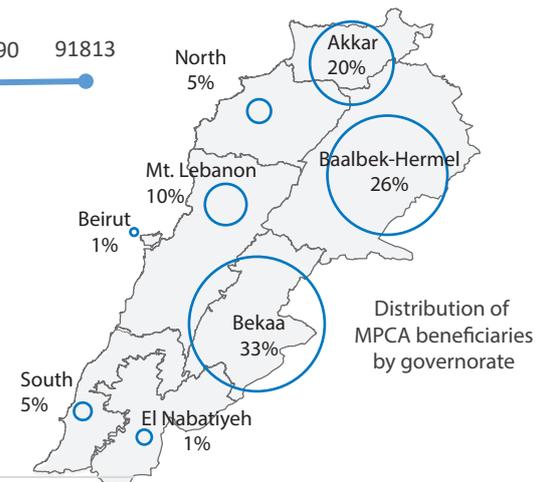
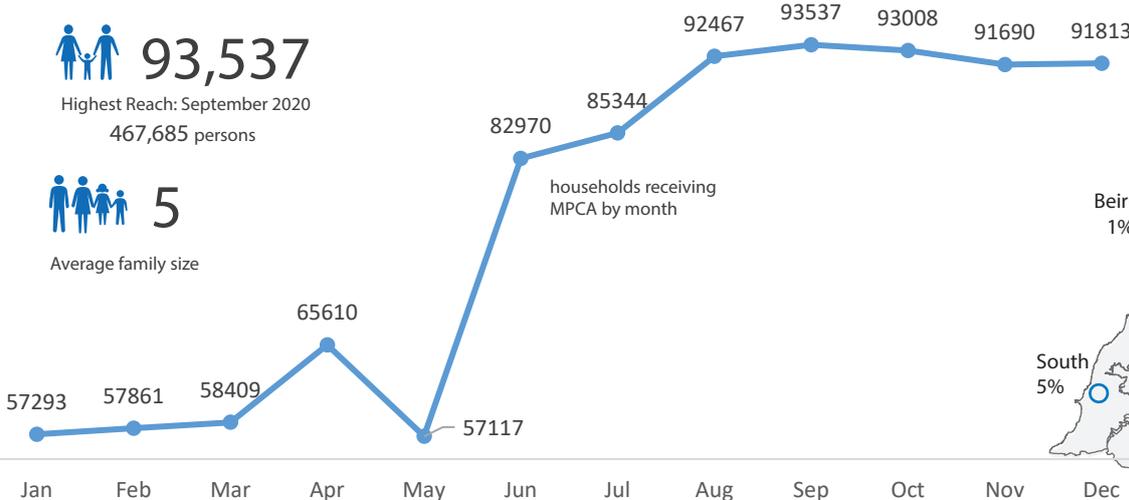
93,537

Highest Reach: September 2020
467,685 persons



5

Average family size





Throughout 2020, 110,193 economically vulnerable households (54% of the total number) were able to meet their basic survival needs through receiving regular, unconditional and unrestricted cash grants. Through monthly cash assistance, vulnerable households have increased liquidity to access basic goods and services available in the local market.

The highest coverage of monthly assistance in 2020 reached 93,537 Syrian households (a 67 per cent increase from 58,090 in 2019), 1,525 vulnerable Lebanese households (a 45 per cent increase from 916 in 2019), and 8,064 Palestinian refugee households (8,771 in 2019) supported with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA). For displaced Syrians, 64 per cent of households, that were found to be economically vulnerable in 2020, were assisted. Coverage for Lebanese remains a major gap with only 3 per cent of vulnerable households receiving MPCA. MPCA to PRS follows a blanket approach for coverage reaching all targeted households. Concerning child wellbeing, approximately 6,000 households (A total of 10,040 children) benefited from child-focused social assistance through UNICEF's Integrated Children Wellbeing Program, from a target of 7,000. The value of MPCA in 2020 totaled to US\$133.4 million across the population cohorts¹.

In addition to regular MPCA, under Output 2.1, 170,911 households had a strengthened ability to meet additional basic survival needs, brought about by seasonal hazards and/or emergencies through seasonal cash assistance, constituting 68 per cent of those in need.

From November through March, families faced additional strains, brought upon by the winter season and vulnerable families are risk of not being to meet basic needs. Additionally, many families face increased challenges in securing income-generating opportunities during winter, compared to other times of the year.

By the end of December 2020, 170,884 households (160,236 Syrian, 8,089 Lebanese, 793 PRL and 1,802 PRS) had benefited from seasonal cash grants that increased their ability to meet their needs during the winter. For displaced Syrians, this constitutes an 80 per cent coverage of vulnerable families. For vulnerable Lebanese families, the gap in seasonal cash assistance was starker, with only 19 per cent of vulnerable households assisted. For Palestinian refugees from Syria and Lebanon, coverage reached 21 per cent and 100 per cent of targets, respectively. Due to the deteriorated economic situation and COVID-19 outbreak, partners also scaled up other types of cash assistance to vulnerable families, namely one-off or temporary emergency cash assistance to cover families' needs after facing an unexpected crisis. In 2020, 1,420 displaced Syrian families, 9,815 vulnerable Lebanese families and 133 Palestinian refugee households received one-off emergency cash assistance. The scale up of temporary cash assistance in light of the public health crisis led to some 27,000 displaced Syrians, 2,000 vulnerable Lebanese and 650 Palestinian families receiving temporary cash assistance (for 3 to 6 months). Through UNICEF's year-end one-off social grant, 29,648 non-Lebanese and 15,126 Lebanese households (over 80,000 children and vulnerable individuals) received a one-off grant of 460,000LBP/child². Seasonal, emergency, and temporary cash assistance amounted to a value of US\$54.5 million in 2020.

Overall, 1,327,503 individuals received basic assistance throughout 2020 including regular MPCA and winter/emergency assistance. This exceeds the initial target of 1,082,811 individuals mainly due to the scale up in assistance to displaced Syrians following the results of the 2020 Vulnerability Assessment results, which shows a drastic increase of the number of people in need (in 2020 89% displaced Syrians were living under the SMEB against 55% in 2020). For the 2020-2021 Winter Cash Assistance Program, UNHCR targeted vulnerable Syrian individuals expected to be severely or highly vulnerable, prioritizing those that do not regularly receive MPCA or who were expected to be discontinued in the following year. As such, the Winter cash program was able to reach over 600,000 Syrian individuals by December 2020 with a one-off cash transfer.

Additionally, 50,127 households faced with seasonal or emergency shocks were able to better cover their unexpected increase in needs through in-kind assistance which included blankets, mattresses, heaters, clothing kits and other essential items. In-kind assistance is scaled up during the winter season, in comparison to other times of the year when ad-hoc distributions support families dealing with emergencies such as evictions or fires.

Throughout the year, partners were faced with numerous obstacles that challenged the cash modality for assistance provision. Challenges included decreased cash liquidity at ATMs, shrinking of ATM networks, restricted mobility and increased health risks related to the COVID-19 outbreak. The primary actions taken by partners to mitigate risks included staggered loading of beneficiary cards to minimize overcrowding at ATMs and introducing flexible modalities (e.g., ability to use ATM cards at Point of Sale) to provide more options to beneficiaries who may have had to travel long distance to reach ATMs. Some partners, namely WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR, also deployed partner staff to key ATMs for in-person ATM monitoring and crowd control during peak loading days. Redemption rates from partners using the LOUISE³ platform has consistently reached over 95 per cent across the last quarter of 2020, indicating that cash recipients have been able to redeem their assistance. Despite the above mentioned challenges, recipients continue to prefer cash assistance to other modalities (i.e. voucher or in-kind assistance)⁴.

The National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) remains the main social assistance programme to target vulnerable Lebanese for MPCA. The Sector helps to channel partner requests for identification of families for basic assistance. At the level of the system and through the work done on the social protection strategy, institutional coordination mechanisms were put in place with the Inter-Ministerial Committee on social policy under the Prime Minister, leading the development and guidance of the National Social Protection Strategy.

¹ Assistance is disbursed to beneficiaries in Lebanese Pounds. The dollar value of assistance is calculated using agency specific exchange rates, which varied from 1,515 LBP/USD to 6,240 LBP/USD throughout the year.

² Capped at three children per household.

³ The Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organizational System for e-Cards (LOUISE) is an operational model that was launched in December 2016 by three United Nations agencies in Lebanon, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP.

The LOUISE model supports the design, delivery and monitoring of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) through a joint delivery mechanism, the common card. LOUISE partners in 2020 included WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, Tdh-L, Shield, and Arcenciel.

⁴ UNHCR, post-distribution monitoring for multi-purpose cash, September 2020.



Under the Outcome 1, which serves to strengthen the ability of vulnerable households to meet their basic survival needs, cash assistance represents a primary source of income for the most economically vulnerable households in Lebanon. Findings from the 2020 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) showed that the proportion of Syrian families that relied on cash assistance from humanitarian organizations as their primary income source increased to 17 per cent, compared to 7 per cent in 2019⁵. Syrian families that receive regular multi-purpose cash assistance reported prioritizing spending on basic needs including food, rent, health costs and hygiene items⁶.

A major challenge faced by partners throughout the year was the difficulty in ensuring an adequate monthly cash transfer value to cover basic needs, while also being cognizant of the growing number of un-assisted families. This is linked to the decrease in purchasing power of the national currency and increased inflation, witnessing a 146 per cent annual increase of the Consumer Price Index in December 2020⁷. Even with the increase in the MPCA transfer value to 400,000 LBP/household/month, reports indicate that families are continuing to struggle for survival and are resorting to negative coping mechanisms at an increasing rate in order to meet their needs, even among those receiving MPCA⁸. A technical revision of the 2014 Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for Syrians in Lebanon in August 2020 showed that the value of non-food basic survival needs increased to 953,245 LBP/household/month compared to 413,890 LBP in 2014.

Under the Outcome 2, to strengthen the ability of populations affected by seasonal hazards, the provision of in-kind assistance filled gaps in basic needs when cash was not the ideal modality for assistance, mainly to cover ad-hoc and immediate needs brought upon by storms, evictions, fires, or other emergency situations. In these instances, in-kind assistance provision allowed families to access basic goods in a timely and immediate manner when disbursement of cash assistance may have caused a delay in receipt of assistance. A post distribution monitoring exercise conducted by UNHCR on their seasonal cash program to Syrians showed that 63 per cent of families reported having had enough winter items including blankets, heaters, mattresses and clothes. Additionally, most families (99 per cent) reported that cash assistance improved their living conditions, reduced the financial burden of the family and reduced feelings of stress⁹.

In 2020, households from all population cohorts were faced with unprecedented challenges that hindered them from meeting basic needs, stemming from the country's ongoing economic deterioration and the COVID-19 outbreak that has further exacerbated already existing vulnerabilities. Estimations show that over half (55 per cent) of the Lebanese population is now living in poverty, almost doubling from 28 per cent in 2019. Extreme poverty has almost tripled from 8 per cent in 2019 to 23 per cent in 2020¹⁰. For displaced Syrians, rates of poverty and extreme poverty increased to 91 per cent and 89 per cent in 2020, compared to 73 per cent and 55 per cent in 2019, respectively¹¹. Gaps in coverage of MPCA assistance are due to several factors that have challenged the ability of partners to scale up regular assistance to meet increased needs. The considerable increase in poverty has not been met with an equal increase in funding; therefore, the majority of vulnerable families remain unassisted through regular basic assistance. Another major challenge that has stalled the increase of coverage to meet overall targets is linked to the continuous devaluation of Lebanese Pound (LBP) and the multiple exchange rates used in the country. The 'black-market' exchange rate has witnessed constant fluctuations and deterioration over the year reaching around 8,500LBP/USD by the end of December 2020, with the official exchange rate and "bank rate" remaining stable at 1,507 LBP/USD and 3,900 LBP/USD, respectively. Efforts made by partners to secure preferential exchange rates with Financial Service Providers exceeding the official rate of 1,507 LBP/USD have allowed for both a steady increase of the monthly transfer value of MPCA (from 260,000LBP/month in 2019 to 400,000 LBP/month), some expansion of coverage throughout the year, and an adjustment of the seasonal cash transfer value to account for inflation. However, the divergence of the 'black-market' rate and other official rates has caused a loss between the dollar value of received funds and the amount disbursed in LBP, making it challenging to scale up assistance further.

In 2020, key partners worked towards developing and finalizing the National Social Protection Strategy. UNICEF, leading the UN Sustainable Development Goals Joint Programme on social protection with ILO, WFP, UNDP, UN Women, and other key stakeholders collaborated on a number of activities to develop the national social protection strategy. This included completing a Social Protection Sector Mapping, publishing the UNICEF/ODI/MOSA 2019 Social Safety Net Assessment, and supporting civil society organizations for people with disabilities, trade unions and development partners to produce position papers on social protection. Additionally, the content of the National Social Protection Strategy was integrated within the 3RF Sector Plan for Social Protection and the UN published their policy position on social protection reform, both of which serve to provide the outline of the National Social Protection Strategy. The main challenges faced by partners and stakeholders to endorse and implement the strategy relate to the frequent shocks that hit the country, including the Government resignation, which caused unexpected delays and complications in the overall process.

⁵ Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees 2020

⁶ UNHCR: post distribution monitoring for multi-purpose cash September 2021

⁷ Consumer Price Index December 2020. Central Administration of Statistics: <http://www.cas.gov.lb/index.php/economic/statistics/en/cpi/en>

⁸ World Food Programme: m VAM Vulnerability and Food Security Assessment: July-August 2021, <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000119575/download/>

⁹ Post Distribution Monitoring for Winter Cash Assistance for Syrian Refugees 2021. UNHCR

¹⁰ UNESCWA 2020 <https://www.unescwa.org/news/Lebanon%20poverty%202020#:~:text=ESCWA%20warns%20that%20more%20than%20half%20of%20Lebanon's%20population%20trapped%20in%20poverty-19&text=Estimates%20reveal%20that%20more%20than%20year's%20rate%20which%20was%2028%25>

¹¹ Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees 2020. UNHCR- UNICEF and WFP



KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2021

A key priority for the Sector in 2021 will be to maintain and scale up regular cash assistance to vulnerable populations for basic needs, where possible. With the increase in poverty and vulnerability rates across all population cohorts in Lebanon, cash assistance serves as a lifeline to families struggling to survive. From both a needs-based and conflict sensitivity perspective, securing funding for social assistance to vulnerable Lebanese remains vital. With the expected expansion of the NPTP and the planned introduction of Social Grants to support households living with specific lifecycle vulnerabilities, the Sector will work to continue supporting partners' identification of vulnerable families through national systems, which remains the primary channel for the provision of assistance to vulnerable Lebanese families.

Maintaining access to meaningful assistance through the increase of the multi-purpose cash assistance transfer value is becoming increasingly important as prices for basic goods and services continue to rise amidst rising inflation rates and serves as a complement to food assistance under the Food Security Sector. Ensuring an appropriate balance of coverage and transfer values of the various cash programs will be of priority for the Sector throughout 2021.

Critical gaps in knowledge remain, particularly with regards to the situation faced by vulnerable Lebanese households. While population poverty and vulnerability rates have been estimated based on available data, there are gaps in terms of the details on expenditure patterns, living conditions and coping strategies among Lebanese households.

Adoption and implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy and subsequent action plan and implementation mechanism, including costing and financing analysis is expected to take place in 2021.

The Sector will also prioritize contributing to efficient and effective referrals by strengthening referral analysis and providing clear communication to relevant sectors. Other priorities include reviewing and updating the Sector's Protection Risk Analysis, developing a protection risk monitoring plan and supporting partners to implement minimum standards for complaint and feedback mechanisms.



CASE STUDY

Serving Beyond Food: WFP's Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Provides Lifeline to Vulnerable Families During the Covid-19 Pandemic
In the year 2020, WFP supported 966,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon, of which around 220,000 were supported with the WFP multipurpose cash assistance to cover basic food and non-food needs. This assistance has allowed beneficiaries to meet their basic survival needs from food, shelter, and medication.

The monthly assistance amount is 100,000 LBP per person to cover food needs, and a top up 400,000 LBP per family for other essential needs.

Aisha arrived in Lebanon in 2016, seeking refuge from the Syrian conflict. She lives in Bekaa with her six children – four girls and two boys, with the eldest son aged 15 and the youngest 3 years. They have faced two lockdowns in Lebanon within the year, which was meant to help curb the spread of coronavirus - but also narrowed employment opportunities.

As the sole breadwinner, Aisha impatiently waits for her assistance to be disbursed as this will allow her to buy household necessities before an imminent and stricter lockdown is implemented in January. "I am waiting till the clock strikes 2 p.m. – that is when the assistance gets loaded in my card," Aisha discloses.

For one and a half years after their arrival, the family struggled with lack of money, no access to education, and insufficient food. The e-card was a game changer, as food needs were addressed, and she continues to express gratitude for it. "When I found out I was selected to receive assistance, I was more than ecstatic. I can hardly describe the feeling, but I will never forget that day. Thank God."

In 2020, the COVID-19 came as an extra blow to the family, but WFP was ready to help. The family felt a reprieve when they were moved from the 'food only' through the e-card modality to 'multi-purpose cash assistance' provided by WFP.



Aisha and her daughter Amira. "I want to be dentist when I grow up," says Amira "I will treat patients, with or without pay."



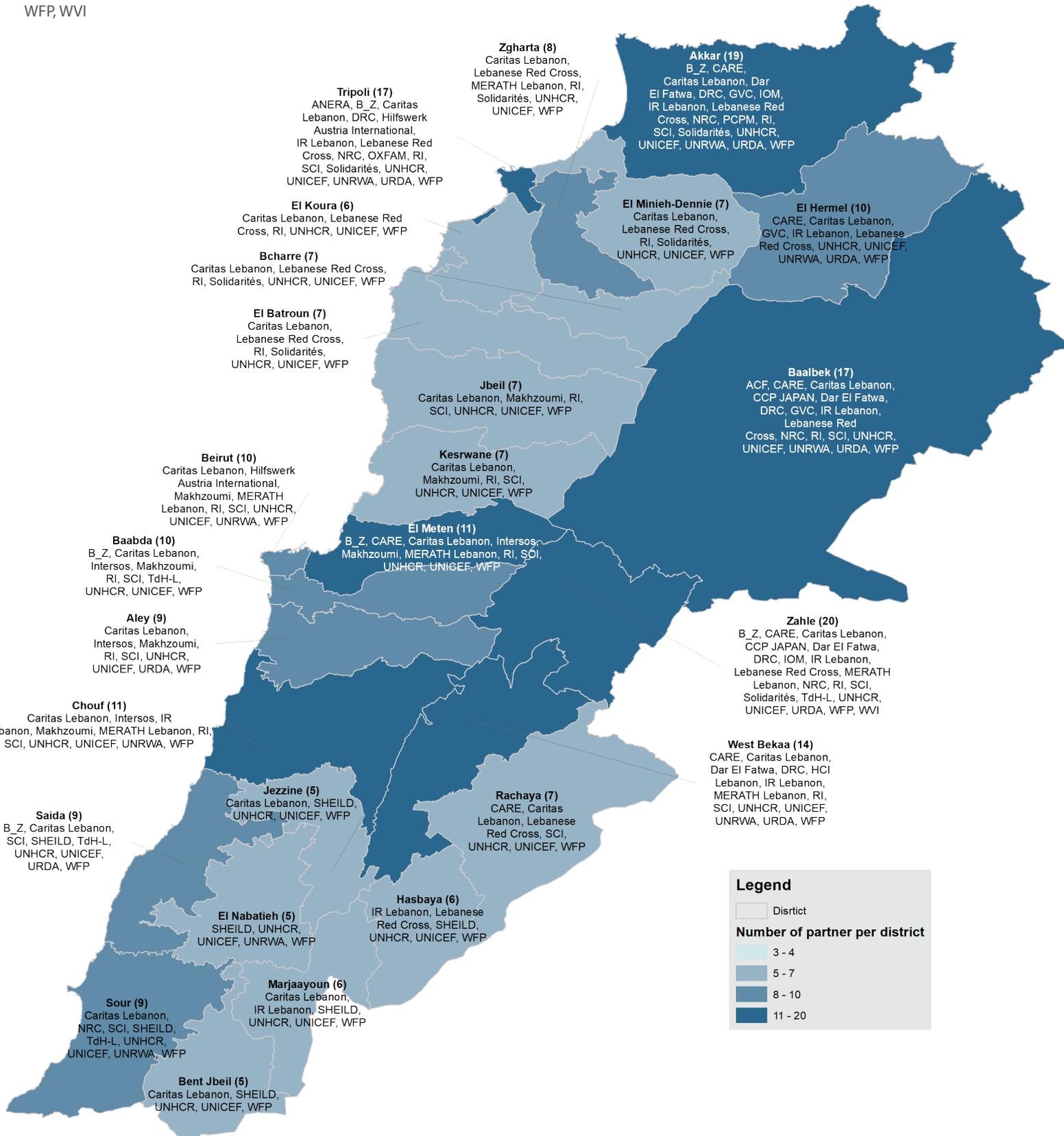
Photo: WFP/Edmond

"Without the additional assistance, we would have been doomed. It keeps us feeling dignified," Aisha says. "We use the cash to pay for different expenses. First off, we pay the rent and electricity. We then buy essential food items, such as rice, sugar, and oil. Whatever is left of the cash is used for Amira's education and any urgent medication for the family". Life has been tough with the food prices increasing almost three-folds this year. Income opportunities also shrunk drastically due to the sharp economic downturn. Still, we hope to keep receiving assistance." Of her six children, Aisha is only able to educate her daughter, Amira. "Tentatively, I cannot afford to take all of them to school," she remarks. "Although, I have high hopes that my children will learn and make something out of themselves. I want them to dream big and work towards a bright future," she says as tears well up in her eyes. "I pray that the future will be better, especially for my children. I pray that the state of the country will improve."



Organizations per district

ACF, ANERA, B&Z, Caritas Lebanon, CCP Japan, Dar El Fatwa, DRC, GVC, HCI Lebanon, Hilfswerk Austria International, ICRC, Intersos, IOM, IR Lebanon, Lebanese Red Cross, Makhzoumi, MERATH Lebanon, NRC, OXFAM, PCPM, RI, SCI, Solidarités, TdH-L, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, URDA, WFP, WVI



Legend

Disrtict

Number of partner per district

- 3 - 4
- 5 - 7
- 8 - 10
- 11 - 20

Note: This map has been produced by UNHCR based on maps and material provided by the Government of Lebanon for UNHCR operational purposes. It does not constitute an official United Nations map. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.