

Key figures

1,119,585	individuals registered or pending registration as of 26 June 2014
38,664	registered refugee households with cash ATM cards for Hygiene and Baby Kits assistance
658	Vulnerable refugee households assisted with core relief items in the South

June developments:

Cash Assistance

- An initial 7000 refugees will receive cash through UNHCR's new unconditional cash assistance programme (UCAP) which will last for five months (August to December 2014).
- The targeting methodology and amount of monthly transfer for the UCAP were agreed upon by the cash working group.
- Each household will receive a monthly payment of LBP 260,000 via an ATM card. Further, 1000 more households will be added each month to the list of beneficiaries.
- The final transfer of cash for hygiene and baby kits via ATM is ready for distribution to 38,664 households.

Core Relief Items (CRIs):

- UNHCR along with its implementing partners in the South (Solidar Suisse, Shield and CISP) assisted 658 vulnerable families with blankets, buckets, hygiene kits, sleeping mats, jerry cans, kitchen sets, mattresses and 888 solar lanterns.

Achievements: January - June

Activity	 reached January-June	 2014 Target
Cash for shelter	21,855	31,170
Emergency cash for protection	1,656	16,500
Cash for hygiene and baby kits	193,320	360,000
Newcomer and vulnerable families assistance	28,130	96,780

Needs

Cash Assistance: Refugee households throughout Lebanon are struggling to meet their basic needs because of lack of access to income generating opportunities and dwindling family resources and savings. As most households rely on market provided



Syrian refugee uses the UNHCR ATM card in Saida, Lebanon@ UNHCR/ A. McConnell

goods and services and accommodation, financial support is critical for the survival of vulnerable families. As an alternative to in-kind assistance and distribution of core relief items, refugees frequently express a preference for financial assistance, which enables them to prioritise their needs and saves time and costs of travelling to distribution sites.

Challenges

Reduced livelihood opportunities: UNHCR winterisation baseline survey reported that only 22% of the households interviewed were able to work. Of those completely reliant on others for support, over 90% cited lack of work as the main problem. Medical conditions or permanent disability were cited as marginal reasons for refugee household members not working. Without any way to meet their living costs, households are dependent on external assistance.

High cost of living: The high cost of living in Lebanon has forced many households to move into substandard accommodation in order to make savings. The monthly cash assistance via ATM transfer is a contribution for the most severely vulnerable households to meet their survival needs.

Dispersed refugee population: Refugees are spread over 1,750 locations in Lebanon. This hinders the distribution of in-kind Core Relief Items (CRI) to those in need and increases logistic costs. It also makes it difficult to conduct quality needs assessment and design assistance according to requirements, gender and age composition of the household.

Poor infrastructure, weather and insecurity: Given the dispersed refugee population and the large number of refugees, distribution of CRIs requires coordinated procurement, transportation, storage and distribution of items. Moreover, ATM machines are not available in Wadi Khaled and Aarsal in the North. Hence UNHCR turned to providing assistance via fuel vouchers and in-kind stoves.

Security concerns: In some parts of the country, refugees face restricted movement and poor access to markets and ATMs. UNHCR is discussing with other agencies on how to address the needs of this group.

Strategy

UNHCR is moving towards the increased use of ATM cards for the distribution of cash assistance, starting with the winterization programme in 2013 – 2014 winter. The use of ATM cards has a number of advantages:

- Given that refugees live in more than 1,750 locations across Lebanon, ATM cards provide a practical means for prompt delivery of cash assistance to refugees in the country.
- In addition, ATM cards empower refugees by providing a dignified means of receiving cash assistance, saving time spent at or travelling to distribution sites.
- The cards enable UNHCR and partners to make the best use of funds available. They eliminate costs related to procurement, storage, and distribution of in-kind assistance.
- Finally, monitoring of electronically recorded transactions allows partners to better assess refugee needs.

In 2014 UNHCR shifted from sector-specific or 'conditional' cash assistance to a more comprehensive 'unconditional' strategy to administer monthly cash grants with the objective of targeting the most vulnerable among refugees. The refugee population at large will continue to benefit from protection services, food, health and education and other *ad hoc* emergency interventions. In this way, cash assistance via ATM supplements, other forms of assistance.

Emergency Stocks: UNHCR maintains a capacity to respond to a sudden increase in new arrivals all through 2014. Supplies of Core Relief Items are regularly replenished, and more warehouse capacity is needed, especially in border areas.

UNHCR implementing partners

Danish Refugee Council (DRC); World Vision (WV); Save the Children; Makhzoumi Foundation; Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED); Caritas, Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention for Local Development (SHEILD); Solidar Suisse; CISP; Concern, Medair and World Vision International.