

Cash Assistance and Core Relief Items Update

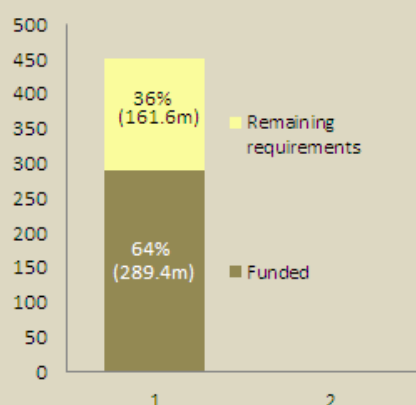
December 2014

Key Figures

1,158,985	individuals registered or pending registration
17,377	registered refugee households reached with unconditional cash assistance via ATM cards
40,960	refugee households received cash for winter assistance
126,610	vulnerable refugees received high-thermal blankets

Funding

UNHCR total requirements: USD **451m**



December developments:



Unconditional cash assistance

- About 10,400 families were reached with unconditional cash assistance in the month of December. Since the programme was rolled out last August, it has progressively incorporated an increasing number of refugees, who receive an amount of LBP 260,000 per month via ATM cards.
- An additional 8,500 families extremely vulnerable families living above 500 meters were initially identified for inclusion into the unconditional cash programme for the winter months. Despite a higher no-show rate than expected, over 82 per cent of these families were reached by end of December. Through household visits, partners' support, referral from other agencies and other complimentary measures, UNHCR expects to increase the number of beneficiaries to around 9,000 families.

Winter Support

- 40,960 vulnerable refugee families received cash for winter support via ATM cards, covering the months of November and December 2014, as well as January 2015. As part of UNHCR's winterization plan, a total of 50,120 families living between 500 and 1,100 meters will receive LBP 120,000 per month during the winter season.
- Fuel vouchers were distributed to approximately 137,160 vulnerable refugees, and another 126,610 received high-thermal blankets.

Achievements: January – December 2014

Activity	 Reached January-December 2014	 2014 Target
Unconditional cash assistance	51,995	55,000
Unconditional cash assistance (winter)	34,890	42,770
Cash-for-shelter	38,165	31,170
Emergency cash-for-protection	3,082	16,500
Cash-for-hygiene and baby kits	213,935	203,000
Core Relief Items (CRIs) for newcomers and others in need	43,020	96,780
Winter Support	Reached December 2014	Target winter 2014-2015*
Cash-for-winter	204,800	250,760
Fuel vouchers	137,160	180,000
Diesel stoves	6,970	17,000
High thermal blankets	126,610	226,000

*Winter 2014-2015: November 2014 to February 2015

Needs

Refugee households throughout Lebanon are struggling to meet their basic needs, particularly during winter season, as they lack access to income generating opportunities and as family resources and savings are dwindling. With most households relying on market provided 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 prioritize their needs and saves time and costs of travelling to distribution sites.

Challenges

High cost of living: The high cost of living in Lebanon has forced many households to move into substandard accommodation to reduce costs. The monthly cash assistance via ATM transfer is a contribution to the most vulnerable households to meet their essential needs to survive, particularly during winter season.

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. Moreover, ATM machines are not available in Wadi Khaled and Aarsal. UNHCR is therefore providing assistance via fuel vouchers and in-kind stoves in these areas.

Strategy

In response to increased needs during the winter season, UNHCR distributes both in-kind CRI and cash for winter using a targeting strategy based on economic vulnerability and exposure to cold. While UNHCR maintains an emergency stock of CRI's and provides a small amount of items for newcomers and persons in need, UNHCR places an emphasis on monthly cash grants with the objective of targeting the most vulnerable refugees. In August 2014, UNHCR shifted from sector-specific cash assistance to unconditional cash assistance through ATM cards, which is designed to supplement protection services, food, health and education and other *ad hoc* emergency interventions.

The use of ATM cards has a several key advantages based on several assessments, research and monitoring reports related to cash-based interventions in Lebanon



Distribution of ATM cards for cash for winter at Zahle registration center, Bekaa, Lebanon @UNHCR/S.Hoibak

- 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.
- ATM cards empower refugees by providing a dignified means of receiving cash, saving time spent at or travelling to distribution sites.
- Cash cards enable UNHCR and partners to make the best use of available funds. They eliminate costs related to procurement, storage, and distribution of in-kind assistance.
- Monitoring of electronically recorded transactions allows partners to better assess refugee needs.

UNHCR implementing partners

Action Contre La Faim; Agence d'aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement (ACTED); Caritas, Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP); Concern Worldwide, Ghirass, Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale (PU-AMI); Relief and Humanitarian Aid Organisation (Dar Al Fatwa); Save the Children; SAWA Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention for Local Development (SHEILD); Solidar Suisse; Terre des Hommes -Italy, World Vision (WVI), and UTOPIA.