



Health staff at the UNRWA Shaboura Health Centre in Rafah, Gaza, packaging medication for elderly Palestine refugees. © 2020 UNRWA Photo by Khalil Adwan

highlights

- UNRWA Health Department is leading on the Agency's COVID-19 response and continue to issue a [one-page daily sitrep](#) with the latest epidemiological figures.
- UNRWA COVID-19 Response Updates for 2020 are available [here](#).
- During September, UNRWA students were to go back to school, or as UNRWA and the region now refer to it, back to learning. The unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that UNRWA has had to maintain a high level of flexibility with regards to which learning modality, or combination of modalities, should be implemented in line with new COVID-19 conditions, the Host Government recommendations or in response to specific COVID-19 related issues in specific schools.
- With the evolving challenges of COVID-19, all five UNRWA fields of operations and the Host countries have had to review and revise their plans for back to school. There were delays to the start of the school year in Lebanon and the Agency was working to support students with some element of remote learning. In Syria the schools opened as planned on 13 September and there has been continued attendance since that time. In the West Bank the school year began on 6 September for grade 1-4 students and on 20 September for grades 5-10 and education was delivered through a combination of home-based remote learning with school based face-to-face learning. Similarly, in Jordan the schools started on 1 September with face-to-face learning. However, on 17 September grades 4-10 classes were moved to fully remote learning in line with the Government of Jordan's decision. School attendance for children in grades 1-3 was left for parental decision.
- Whichever modality is in place, there are key principles with regards to health and safety – from awareness raising for students to safe practices in schools. UNRWA Education Department has developed the “COVID-19: Protocol for the safe and healthy reopening of UNRWA Education Institutions”. Similarly, technical and vocational education training (TVET) centres have updated their Health and Hygiene Safety Protocols and are working to ensure adherence to them.
- One lesson learned, if there were ever any doubts, is the key role that teachers play in ensuring that children have access to education, particularly during times of crisis. UNRWA Education Director and Senior Education Specialist have worked alongside other United Nations agencies – through the Interagency Group – to plan for a regional World Teachers' Day on 5 October 2020. The global theme this year is “Teachers: Leading in Crisis, Reimagining the Future”. This provides an opportunity for the world to reflect on teachers' achievements, the challenges they face and to imagine how to move forward positively.

jordan A night curfew (1 a.m. to 6 a.m.), operational since 17 March, remains in place. Regular international commercial flights on a limited number of airlines resumed on 8 September. The Government of Jordan began imposing home quarantine instead of institutional quarantine for all incoming travellers.

west bank The Palestinian Authority (PA) extended the State of Emergency for another 30 days until the end of September. There has been a spike in COVID-19 cases coinciding with widespread non-compliance of PA prevention measures that include restrictions on the numbers attending wedding events and the wearing of face masks. New access restrictions, including comprehensive lockdowns between the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel during the Jewish High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) were extended to three weeks. Six UNRWA schools were closed in East Jerusalem on 17 September and are scheduled to reopen on 14 October.

gaza Lockdown restrictions, imposed by local authorities across the Gaza Strip since the first cases of local transmission of COVID-19 were identified on 24 August, were gradually eased throughout September. The majority of Gaza is now a “green area” allowing for movement inside each governorate before the 8 p.m. curfew until 7 a.m. Movement between the five governorates and in the “red areas” remained limited. Most UNRWA staff have been working from home, except those providing essential health and sanitation services. Food assistance restarted on 15 September, including through using schools to spread out the distribution pick-up points. The Egyptian border remained closed. Kerem Shalom crossing was opened for basic commodities and fuel. Erez terminal remained closed with controlled entry facilitated for limited numbers of Gaza ID holders. Quarantine for returning travellers was reduced from 21 to seven days.



syria Internal curfew and movement restrictions have been lifted. People are now able to use the border crossings between Syria and Lebanon during specific times and under specific conditions. Schools reopened on 13 September, including UNRWA-managed schools across the country for 49,000 Palestine refugee students. Commercial passenger flights at Damascus International Airport resumed on 1 October. The Jordanian authorities announced the reopening of the Jaber Border Crossing between Syria and Jordan for commercial trucks, effective 27 September (the crossing had been closed since 13 August).

lebanon Most internal movement restrictions have been lifted. A night curfew remains in force between 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. Over 100 towns and villages have been placed in lockdown in order to reduce the ongoing rapid spread of COVID-19.

unrwa response



health

COVID-19 response activities	
Jordan (JFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 cases: As of 30 September, the number of COVID-19 cases in Jordan was 11,825 (4,626 recoveries, 61 deaths). Thirty-two UNRWA staff have tested positive, including 19 staff working at Amman New Camp health centre (HC), and one staff member has died. • Health centres: Amman New Camp HC closed for seven days after staff were confirmed positive. Emergency teams were deployed from other HCs and the dispensing of non-communicable disease (NCD) medications and vaccinations for children resumed on 26 September. Two more HCs (in Jabal Hussein and Baqa'a camps) were also temporarily closed due to confirmed COVID-19 cases among staff. The other 22 HCs continued full outpatient services during September. The mobile dental clinic in the King Abdullah Park (Irbid) for Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) continued to operate on a weekly basis. • Telemedicine/hotlines/NCD mobile app: Preparations started for the roll-out of telemedicine services in all 25 HCs. • Community outreach campaigns: Health awareness messages and the Agency's operational updates continued to be distributed through social media channels. A Facebook page was created to provide JFO COVID-19 updates.
Lebanon (LFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 cases: LFO recorded 613 additional COVID-19 cases among Palestine refugees in September. Between 21 February and 30 September, 1,029 Palestine refugees have confirmed COVID-19 positive (519 inside the camps, 510 outside camps). By 30 September, 40 staff members had contracted COVID-19 and no fatalities have been recorded. • Isolation/quarantine centres: Fifty-eight Palestine refugees had been admitted to LFO's Sibliin isolation centre by the end of September. In support of Lebanon's single unified approach to COVID-19, Sibliin has also hosted four Lebanese citizens, three Syrian refugees and 23 migrant workers from Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sudan. Preparations are ongoing to activate the Agency's Sammouh School as an isolation centre as COVID-19 continues to spread in Ein El Hilweh camp beside Saida. Similar preparations are ongoing for the El Buss isolation centre in Tyre. • Health centres: Triage facilities have been set up at all 27 LFO HCs, which continue to operate at reduced working hours (from 8.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.). Since 16 March, one family health team has been assigned to work with patients with flu-like symptoms on a two-week rotational basis.
Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 cases: Fourteen Palestine refugees have tested positive and five refugees have died from the coronavirus. Ten UNRWA staff have tested COVID-19 positive and six staff remain in quarantine. The Government of Syria has approved COVID-19 PCR-tests in five private laboratories in Damascus. SFO is finalizing the contract with one of these, SABAH Laboratory, where staff will be able to take a PCR-test in coordination with the Agency's Health Department. The Agency will reimburse staff 95 per cent of the cost.

COVID-19 response activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Health centres: The Agency's 25 health facilities continued to operate a triage system for people with respiratory symptoms and 19,609 cases (non-COVID-19) were diagnosed during September (71,210 patients have reported respiratory complaints since reporting began in March). SFO's emergency plan phase two was implemented during the reporting period resulting in the suspension of a number of health services, including all screening activities, women's pre-conception care and pre-natal examinations, NCD examinations, dental curative consultations, and mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS) screening. · Isolation/quarantine centres: Syrian local authorities have informed humanitarian partners that there are 34 identified quarantine facilities with 5,764 beds and 50 isolation spaces in 13 (out of 14) governorates. At the central level, the Ministry of Health announced that 21 isolation centres are currently operating with a capacity of 1,034 beds, including 855 isolation beds, 179 ICU beds and 158 ventilators. There are reports that patients experiencing mild symptoms have been requested by some isolation centres to quarantine at home. · Medication home deliveries: SFO carried out 388 NCD medication home deliveries during the reporting period, bringing the total since March to 1,895. The target is to provide two months' supply of medicines for 8,000 vulnerable NCD patients (aged 65+). Patients in Muzeirib and Jilin (Dera'a) continued to collect their medicines from the Agency HC due to the ongoing insecurity in the area. · Telemedicine/helplines: 7,054 telemedicine calls were received during the reporting period, bringing the total to 25,220 calls since the service became available. · Community outreach campaigns: Awareness-raising activities on COVID-19 preventative measures continued across Syria with two sessions every month at each HC and through telemedicine. Awareness messages in Arabic to students, parents and the refugee community at large were posted weekly on SFO's Facebook page.
Gaza (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · COVID-19 cases: The number of confirmed cases was 2,765, including 31 UNRWA staff, by end September (the cumulative total since the first confirmed reported case of local transmission on 24 August). The total number of people in compulsory quarantine in local authority centres was 1,823 and an estimated 8,000 were self-quarantining at home. · Health centres: All in-person health services resumed on 12 September. The number of patient visits to HCs, using the appointment system, was 82,288. Remote consultations over the reporting period was 117,449 for medical issues and 2,099 for MHPSS services. · Triage points: The number of visits to triage points during September was 11,369. · Medication home deliveries: The delivery of lifesaving medicine to NCD patients continued with 44,945 drop-offs during September.
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · COVID-19 cases: There was a spike in COVID-19 cases among refugees in the camps with daily cases averaging 100 and the total number of cases reaching 6,751: 2,268 in the Hebron area (34 per cent), 2,679 cases in the Nablus area (39 per cent) and 1,804 cases in East Jerusalem (27 per cent). The cumulative COVID-19-related deaths among refugees was 63 by 30 September. · The total number of UNRWA staff who have contracted COVID-19 is 190, including 68 health staff. As of 30 September, there were 61 active cases among staff: 14 in the Jerusalem area, 13 in the Hebron area, 27 in the Nablus area, and seven staff at the Field Office in East Jerusalem. · Isolation/quarantine centres: A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with the West Bank's Camp Community Services Committee (CSC) on 17 September in the presence of stakeholders, including representatives from the Palestinian Authority (PA) Ministry of Health. An MOU was signed on 17 September to cover three isolation centres in Ramallah that will accommodate refugees from Amari, Kalandia and Deir Ammar camps. Arroub isolation centre at the CSC hall will accommodate refugees from Arroub camp. MOUs are in the process of being signed for isolation centres in the North area to accommodate refugees from Askar, Balata, Fara'a, Tulkarm, Nur Shams and Jenin camps.



Some 16,000 Palestine refugee children under age five were vaccinated at UNRWA health centres across Syria during a one week vaccination campaign. © 2020 UNRWA Photo

COVID-19 response activities	
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication home deliveries: WBFO delivered medications to 1,942 patients, mainly NCD patients and patients with disabilities. • Telemedicine/hotlines/NCD mobile app: 316 calls were received through the toll-free health centre hotline during September, while 49 home visits were made for pregnant women and elderly refugees. • Community outreach campaigns: A funding proposal was prepared for a mobile health team, which will operate in remote areas in Area C and in East Jerusalem for three months until the end of 2020. Operations will start once funding is confirmed. • Other COVID-19 related issues: A remote meeting was held between health staff from WBFO and JFO to exchange experiences of the COVID-19 crisis, including preparedness and service planning, staffing resources, challenges and lessons learned, the role of partnerships-stakeholders and communications that affect operations and services.
HQ Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ Health Department has compiled all COVID-19 technical guidelines and awareness materials into one package to make it available for review and use as a comprehensive reference by the management and programmes at UNRWA HQ and in all five Fields. • Data on the detection of COVID-19 confirmed cases among Palestine refugees, especially those living in camps, and UNRWA staff continued to be monitored. Contact tracing was carried out with anyone who visited Agency HCs within 14 days of testing positive for COVID-19. Numbers are being uploaded/updated daily on a specialized platform (UN notification system) that is used by other UN agencies and programmes. • The Health Department is extracting from the e-Health system the latest number of patient visits for each health centre and each service in all five Fields. The information is being disseminated to Field health programme managers to enable them to monitor and evaluate service provision fluctuations during the COVID-19 pandemic. • UNRWA Health Department has co-authored “<i>WHO guidance note: Health system response to COVID-19 in the context of internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and returnees in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO)</i>”. The final version will be published by WHO/EMRO.



UNRWA education staff in Saida, Lebanon prepare tablets for distribution to students as part of the summer Self-Learning Programme. © 2020 UNRWA photo by Ahmad Mahmoud



education

COVID-19 response activities

<p>Jordan (JFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Learning: Twenty UNRWA schools, out of 169 as of 30 September, remained closed and switched to distance learning due to Government isolation measures as well as COVID-19 cases among UNRWA teachers and students. On 18 September, the Ministry of Education suspended student attendance for two weeks and then extended this until 16 October. Schools switched to distance learning for all students except grades 1-3 whose parents could choose whether their children attended school or studied at home (80 per cent of grade 1-3 students continued to attend school). Students whose schools had closed accessed Agency online lessons as well as lessons on TV and online provided by the Ministry of Education. Thirty-two per cent of Agency students in Jordan do not have smart devices and 21 per cent have limited or no internet access at home. UNRWA distributed wrap-around hardcopy materials developed by UNICEF for grades 1-6. • Psychosocial Support (PSS), Safety and Hygiene: Teachers have been delivering hygiene messages to students. Other preventive measures were carried out, including providing cleaning materials and disinfecting schools. • TVET: Vocational courses started in mid-September with 50 per cent blended learning. Preparations continued for technical courses and the teachers' college to resume in mid-October with a blended learning.
<p>Lebanon (LFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Learning: On 14 September LFO launched an accelerated remote catch-up programme to help approximately 24,000 school students review materials from the much-interrupted 2019/20 school year. The catch-up programme is scheduled to run until 10 October. LFO is awaiting a final decision by the Lebanese Minister of Education on dates for the start of the new school year and what shape it will take. LFO Education Programme is extensively preparing for both fully online and blended (partially in-class, partially online) modalities. • TVET: The southern section of Sibliin Training Centre (not in use and separated from the isolation centre) resumed operations on 14 September to help the 2019/20 students complete their practical and on-the-job training. In-person teaching activities were suspended on 24 September when a staff member tested positive for COVID-19. The premises were disinfected and classes resumed on 29 September.

COVID-19 response activities

Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-learning: The 2020/21 school year began on 13 September and during the first two weeks catch-up materials were used to help compensate for lost formal education time. Self-Learning materials were finalized for the whole curriculum. • PSS, Safety and Hygiene: Hand sanitizers have been distributed to each classroom in every school as well as reusable face masks for all students and staff. Cleanliness and hygiene is followed up daily in all schools. Awareness sessions for school principals were conducted with Agency doctors to agree on the criteria for referring school students with suspected COVID-19 symptoms to UNRWA HCs. SMS awareness messages on COVID-19 prevention were sent out to all students and staff. • TVET: 632 TVET students (256 female and 376 male) graduated during the reporting period and 75 instructors were trained on e-learning techniques. A total of 839 TVET students (466 male and 373 female) started the new academic year on 27 September with the following COVID-19 preventative measures in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance in shifts for first- and second-year students in order to maintain physical distancing. • Distribution of reusable masks to all students, instructors and staff and gloves also distributed to cleaners and kitchen workers. • Distribution of hand sanitizer in all classrooms, workshops, laboratories, dining rooms and dormitories. • Cleaning and daily disinfection of all bathrooms, classrooms, workshops, laboratories and yards. • Awareness sessions for all students on personal COVID-19 prevention practices by school counsellors and recreational officers. • Training of trainers (TOT) for health instructors and health committee on COVID-19 signs and symptoms and the screening and referral of students and staff and related actions. • Coordination with SFO field security and risk management team to ensure physical distancing during students' entry and exit from TVET centres and to measure temperatures and organize referrals to Agency HCs when necessary. • Suspension of canteen services and students asked to bring their own food and water. • Provision of disposable food utensils in the dining room for boarding students.
Gaza (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Learning: The procurement of textbooks for all students is ongoing as in previous years. Self-learning materials will be available to students for follow up with their teachers and to support them with blended learning. • Preparations to re-open schools were in progress taking into consideration student and staff safety. • The registration of grade 1 students for the 2020/21 academic year was finalized with precautionary health measures in place. As of 30 September, 33,073 refugee students (17,345 boys, 15,728 girls) were registered at UNRWA schools. • PSS, Safety and Hygiene: Preventive measures were underway, including disinfecting all schools, providing cleaning materials and training school guards on the effective use of disinfectants to ensure all schools are adequately prepared to receive students. • TVET: New e-learning platforms were created and used for distance learning. TVET centres also participated in the preparation of an Agency-wide code of ethics for online communication and self-learning materials to ensure that these are neutral, appropriate and compliant with copyright. The training will start with improved health measures in place as soon as the current lockdown is lifted. If the lockdown continues over a longer period other options will be considered: the catch-up approach of distance learning with all possible tools, including e-learning platforms, demonstrations, videos and social media for theoretical subjects.

COVID-19 response activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership and Communication: Consultations took place between the Agency’s education and health programmes and the local authorities on how to implement the best possible scenario for students, whether through a blended or distance learning approach depending on a reduction in the number of COVID-19 cases.
<p style="text-align: center;">West Bank (WBFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Learning: The 2020/21 school year started according to plan on 6 September, in line with the PA decision on schools and back to learning. Ninety-six Agency schools were opened and 19,166 students from grades 1-4 attended school with face-to-face learning. On 20 September, 26,785 students from grades 5-9 returned to their UNRWA schools for face-to-face learning and blended teaching. Classes were split with half of the students attending school while the other half studied at home in rotation. The schools opened for six days with three days for face-to-face learning per group. Wearing of face masks and social distancing were compulsory in the classrooms. By the end of September, the number of students reached 45,965 compared to 54,714 at the beginning of the previous school year. Due to the closure-lockdown in East Jerusalem (8 September to 14 October) six schools implemented self-learning. The Education Programme distributed a guide to parents to help them support their children’s learning using the UNRWA Self-Learning Programme. • PSS: A Psychosocial Support and Recreational Activities Resource Guide was made available for teachers and psychosocial staff. Work on a referral system based on prepared protocols for each case continued. A school counsellor is coordinating with local community institutions to provide a “school-nearby place” for counselling activities on days students do not attend school. • Safety and Hygiene: Strict health protocols are implemented at schools with a focus on wearing face masks and social-physical distancing. Active confirmed cases or contacts with active cases were managed based on UNRWA’s guide “Managing infected cases of COVID-19 in UNRWA schools”. • TVET: The 2020/21 academic year started on 6 September at training centres and one Education Science Faculty in the West Bank. At the Kalandia Training Centre (KTC) 265 new (male) trainees were accepted. At the Ramallah Women’s Training Centre (RWTC) 798 female students registered, including 431 new trainees. Studies were split between online and face-to-face teaching. At the Education Science Faculty (ESF) 676 students were enrolled, including 170 new trainees, and were distributed between online and face-to-face teaching. • Monitoring and Evaluation: WBFO Education Programme has developed a monitoring checklist for schools (in English and Arabic) to ensure compliance with the guidelines and health protocols during COVID-19. • Partnerships and Communication: The Director of UNRWA Operations met the PA Minister of Education to discuss strengthening coordination and partnership to support efforts for the new academic year. Agency schools and the Education Programme communicated regularly with parents by phone and through social media to compensate for the lack of face-to-face parent-teacher meetings. Communication and the dissemination of information materials and messages on COVID-19 is ongoing between school principals, other Agency departments, students, parents, refugee communities and camp services committees (CSCs). Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) visited schools in Fawwar camp and ran sessions on proper hand washing, wearing face masks and social distancing. Community health messages and posters are being produced through a joint initiative between the PA Ministry of Health, UNRWA, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO and local private sector institutions and the media to promote COVID-19 health messages for children, students and the community in general.
<p style="text-align: center;">HQ Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNRWA education teams at HQ work to support the Fields in any way they can. This has been through ensuring the weekly substantive discussions amongst the Field Chiefs of Education continue with the HQ Task Force leading on key areas within the education programme, including with Agency-wide research studies and analyzing the findings for moving forward. Research on children’s access to technology has played a key role in Field decision making on the remote learning modalities. The teacher study on their experience and reflections is providing valuable

COVID-19 response activities

HQ Programme

insights into how the Agency's structures as a whole need to support the new modalities of learning, not teachers alone.

- The Education Department is also moving forward, working alongside the Information Management and Technology Department (IMTD), and in full discussion with the Fields, to design and implement an Agency-wide student learning platform.

- The Education Department is supporting fundraising with regards to three main areas: the need for additional staff (teachers, school attendants and school counsellors), PPE, cleaning supplies and equipment, devices and connectivity, and printing of self-learning materials.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought about changes with regards to the role of families, where some support and guidance from parents is important for ensuring that children remain connected with learning. UNRWA has strengthened the support offered to parents through awareness sessions and materials aimed at providing guidance on how children can access successfully the learning materials and activities made available by the Agency.

- To ensure children do not miss further learning, in whatever model of learning, the Education Department's response continued to be framed under the five focus areas:

- **Learning Continuity**

a) The HQ Curriculum team has been supporting the review of the learning materials that Fields developed for student Catch Up programmes, particularly in Lebanon and Gaza. The team is reviewing the new edition soft copy textbooks for the 2020/21 academic year produced by the PA Ministry of Education, as well as the West Bank Self Learning Materials (SLM), which were developed for the first semester. Follow-up was made with the field offices on the availability of new school textbooks – and also initiating any subsequent reviews – for the coming school year as the COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays in the production of textbooks in some Fields.

b) The EdTech Task Force is in place to support remote learning and is beginning regular meetings with Field focal points who have provided feedback on the initial design of the planned Agency-wide Content Hub (online platform aimed, as a first step, at offering access to UNRWA learning materials). They have also provided inputs into strategic approaches to expanding internet access and other key issues. Work is underway to secure a cloud hosting and short-term staffing support for the development of the Content Hub. The IMTD team in Gaza is working to develop and launch the Content Hub as soon as possible. The Education Department is working on the text for the main Content Hub landing pages, while field offices are preparing Self-Learning materials that will be uploaded on the platform.

- **PSS, Safety and Hygiene:** Work continues to support safety and hygiene matters in schools through the procurement of cleaning, disinfection and sanitizing supplies, as well as providing PSS and recreational materials in the context of planning for Back to Learning. The Agency-wide drawing and writing event, launched in July, aimed to encourage a wide participation from students and the deadline has been extended to mid-October. HQ Education, with the support of IMTD, has developed a user-friendly manual to guide and support the Fields' focal points reporting on and uploading students' contributions.

- **TVET:** TVET HQ is preparing portfolios for each Field outlining the activities and next steps for the vocational training centres' (VTCs) COVID-19 response. TVET HQ continues to follow-up with all Field offices on planning and progress made to date, practical training VTC reopening, curricula catch-up and plans for graduation. VTCs' Monitoring Tool data on the COVID-19 response is being analysed and discussions with Field offices will follow. The process for contracting a TVET Online Pedagogy Consultant is also underway. In addition to the work on the COVID-19 response, TVET Norms and Standards have been developed and discussions on their implementation are now taking place.

COVID-19 response activities

<p>HQ Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluation: The Flash Appeal indicator methodologies for Education, to be used until the end of 2020, have been revised and shared with the field offices. The Teacher Support Study report is nearly finalized and key findings have been incorporated in the forthcoming UNRWA Guide to Education in COVID-19. The Agency-wide COVID-19 Student Survey questionnaire has been drafted, although with schools still closed in Gaza, Jordan and Lebanon, survey implementation is likely to be later in the semester or replaced with a phone-based methodology. • Partnerships and Funding: The Education Department continues to engage in the regional and international discourse on the COVID-19 pandemic. An article, “The UNRWA Education in Emergencies Response to COVID-19” was published in the new Education Disrupted, Education Reimagined eBook (click here to view the article on page 160). HQ Education will be contributing to a regional webinar for the Arab Region on World Teachers’ Day (WTD) on 8 October organized by UNESCO and the Global Teacher Task Force. The Webinar will focus on how teachers have embraced/developed different types of leadership skills and how they have been supported by education stakeholders. The Director of Education will also participate in a global Webinar panel on 7 October, organized by Educate A Child, on the role of teachers during COVID-19. • Planning: HQ Education is developing a guide to “Quality education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons learned and future implications”, which seeks to capture the key principles and approaches that have shaped the evolution of UNRWA COVID-19 education response.
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relief and social services (rss)

COVID-19 response activities

<p>Jordan (JFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency cash assistance: Distribution of COVID-19 one-time cash assistance of JD 182 started for 20,277 ex-Gazan families on 27 September using the Jordan Post Company. Among them, 1,997 ex-Gazan families who received JD 100 in August are to receive an additional JD 82. Distribution was temporarily stopped for a week while the company prioritized the distribution of the Government’s National Aid Fund. • Community awareness: Agency social workers continued contacting refugee families, including PRS, by phone and WhatsApp to provide health awareness messages, support and advice on available emergency hotlines. Over 1,000 calls were made during the month.
<p>Lebanon (LFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency cash assistance: LFO completed the first round of its emergency cash distribution on 30 September. Approximately 91,000 eligible heads of family have collected assistance for their families from 18 May to the end of September. • Hotlines: Registration and relief issues continued to be handled over the hotlines where possible. A minimum number of families were offered appointments at area offices to pick up renewed registration cards.
<p>Syria (SFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency cash assistance: The second cash round closed on 30 July with 414,615 (99.1 per cent) beneficiaries receiving cash assistance. SFO had to reduce the amount of targeted cash assistance in 2019 due to inadequate funding and a targeted approach was introduced in the second half of 2019. This prioritized cash assistance to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees, specifically targeting female-headed households, persons with disabilities, households headed by older persons and unaccompanied minors (orphans). They now receive a higher social transfer value of US\$ 14 per person per month. The remaining caseload will continue to receive a reduced amount of US\$ 9 per person per month. • Emergency food distribution/food baskets: Procurement and food packaging was finalized for the second food distribution round, which will start on 7 October. Given the exceptional circumstances this will be a blanket food distribution and an estimated 418,000 Palestine refugees will receive food assistance in this round.



A Palestine refugee registers herself to receive an UNRWA cash transfer in Beddawi refugee camp, Lebanon. This emergency cash assistance is provided to mitigate the socio-economic hardship caused by COVID-19. © 2020 UNRWA photo by Maysoun Mustafa

COVID-19 response activities

Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection/GBV: PSS services were provided to 870 refugees by WhatsApp/phone (220 male, 650 female). Several yoga sessions were conducted for 80 male UNRWA staff in Damascus, Dera'a, Homs, Hama and Lattakia. 1,678 children were registered in Early Childhood Centres at community-based organizations (CBOs) and 12 CBOs started their activities in September. • Community awareness: An initiative "Let's proceed safely" was carried out by a youth project for 80 children (45 girls, 35 boys) in the Alliance area in Damascus. The activities aimed at increasing general hygiene awareness and teaching children the best way to hand wash to protect themselves from COVID-19.
Gaza (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food basket assistance: 37,734 families received food baskets in September. • Hotlines: Hotlines continued to operate while RSS offices remained closed. 9,629 calls and 313 emails were received from refugees with enquiries mainly relating to food distribution. • PSS support: Five refugees suffering from acute stress and anxiety due to the COVID-19 crisis were provided with support that included psychosocial consultations for three cases and case management for two. 10,841 elderly refugees (6,098 females, 4,743 males) were provided with psychological first aid (PFA) in coordination with the Health Department. Eight cases were identified for follow-up social work interventions.
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency cash assistance: Due to funding shortages no cash assistance was provided to vulnerable refugees in September. • Emergency food distribution/food baskets/NFIs (hygiene kits): 4,797 food baskets were distributed throughout the West Bank as well as 2,579 hygiene "dignity" kits for women. • Protection/GBV: The Child and Family Protection Programme followed up on 332 protection cases during September: 228 gender-based violence (GBV) cases; and 104 child protection cases. The types of violence reported included physical and psychological abuse, neglect, denial of resources, sexual abuse and electronic exploitation, in addition to suicides as a result of GBV. The Child and Family Protection Programme (CFPP) has developed two main packages: 1) safe identification and referral; 2) caring for children suffering from sexual violence. • Emergency hotlines/Psychological First Aid (PFA): 145 calls benefiting 763 indirect and direct beneficiaries, including 303 children, were made in coordination with the protection team. The PFA hotline provided 218 interventions, including 70 direct consultations, and 148 refugees were referred for specialized services such as PSS, food assistance, protection and health. • Community awareness: The Social Services Disability Programme has developed new MOUs with partners to support students with disabilities during COVID-19 closures. Eighteen children were provided with education and rehabilitation devices and rehabilitation specialists worked with the students and their families. These services were provided online via Facebook family groups and WhatsApp for families in Nour Shams and Camp No.1 in the Nablus area.
HQ Programme	<p>Staff care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A counseling service remains available to Area staff in all five fields and HQ Amman to provide additional support with issues arising from the COVID-19 context. This service is confidential and free of charge. · A counseling service for international staff continues to be available to international staff in all five fields and HQ Amman upon request. This service is provided by external clinical psychologists and is confidential and free of charge.



COVID-19 response activities	
Jordan (JFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One protection case was recorded and follow-up was made with a referral to the relevant programme.
Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV/CP (child protection)/MHPSS: Family Support Offices have remained open in all areas to ensure that GBV and legal support services continue to be provided. Forty-seven beneficiaries were provided with family support services during September. • Inclusion (disability): Assistive devices were provided to 23 persons with disabilities in September. A disability inclusion training was held on 30 September for ten CBO volunteers in Damascus. Professional training in intellectual development and speech difficulties targeted 15 rehabilitation workers, volunteers and education staff in the Damascus area. • Helplines: The number of calls received on the helpline decreased during September. In total the helpline (RSS, Education and Emergency food/cash) has received 3,554 calls since the system was put in place early April. • Community engagement: In-person protection activities for particularly vulnerable Palestine refugees have started to gradually resume. The main focus is on children, including those with disabilities. In-person trainings for UNRWA staff continued with a focus on addressing violence against children (AVAC). Strict COVID-19 preventative measures were in place and there were limited numbers of trainees per session. Online training options have been further developed and will be used if in-person training sessions are suspended again. In person activities for older persons remain on hold. • Monitoring and evaluation: Monitoring of the protection situation and political developments affecting access for humanitarian assistance is ongoing.
Gaza (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) focussing on COVID-19 and a contact directory for refugee reference has been drafted. • Child protection: 348 children were remotely assessed as part of a project to support children at risk of school drop-out. • Regular neutrality inspections remain suspended due to COVID-19 movement restrictions.
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twenty remote communities particularly affected by the COVID-19 lockdown and access restrictions were identified, including in the Seam Zone. The Agency provided NCD medications, food parcels, coordinated health needs and organized civil-military coordination to facilitate humanitarian access. A need was identified for dignity kits, including for women, elderly persons and people with disabilities, to be included in UNRWA hygiene kits. • Community engagement: Work was underway with UNICEF and WHO Risk Communications and Community Engagement Team to adapt existing COVID-19 messages for dissemination in refugee communities.
HQ Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability inclusion: A “Tip sheet for monitoring a disability-inclusive response to COVID-19 in humanitarian settings” was circulated to the Agency’s Disability Task Force and field offices. The document was developed by the Disability Advisory Group in collaboration with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy Humanitarian Work Stream, of which UNRWA is a member. • The Protection Division provided inputs to strengthen disability inclusion in the methodology of the proposed JFO and UN Women joint COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessment. • Gender and GBV: Best practices on gender and GBV during the COVID-19 response at the field level were documented in the monthly Gender Bulletin.

COVID-19 response activities

- **Addressing Violence Affecting and Involving Children (AVAC):** The AVAC “Staying Safe Online” campaign, comprising of an animation and social media campaign for use throughout the Agency, as well as a series of radio broadcasts in Gaza, is currently under development and procurement.



infrastructure & camp improvement (icip)

COVID-19 response activities

Lebanon (LFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation services in Lebanon’s 12 official camps continued to operate. All 27 health centres were disinfected at the end of every working day.
Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily sanitation services in the nine official camps and one unofficial camp continued to be carried out as well as disinfection activities in UNRWA facilities and on streets. Additional disinfection services are provided for Palestinian gatherings that are not supported by the local municipalities, including Khirbet al-Shayyab (Rif Damascus). The disinfection of garbage collection points continued along with larger areas in the camps and PPEs were distributed to all sanitation staff as needed.
Gaza Strip (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 6,000 metric tons of solid waste was collected in the camps. • ICIP pumped about 240,000 m³ of water from UNRWA water wells and provided an additional 100 m³ to all camps using Agency water tankers.
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting was held with Al-Bireh, Ramallah and Tulkarm municipalities to strengthen collaboration and partnership between UNRWA and the PA’s Joint Services Council in order to better manage and resolve the build-up of solid waste in the camps in their areas.



UNRWA staff disinfect the streets of Aqabat Jaber refugee camp, West Bank. © 2020 UNRWA Photo

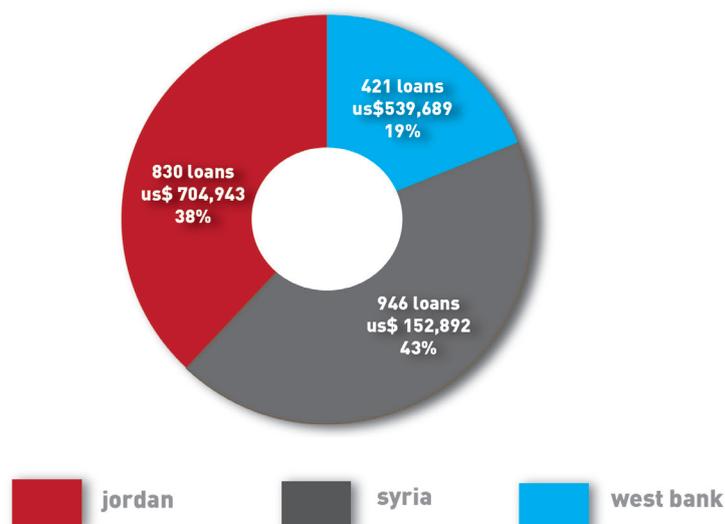


COVID-19 response activities

Consolidated information from four fields and HQ

- During September all microfinance offices and branches in Gaza were closed due to the COVID-19 crisis. MD branches in Jordan and Syria were opened through September for the collection of payments, loan disbursements and low-profile lending activities. Similarly, West Bank branches were fully open with the exception of the partial shut-down of Jenin and Nablus branches (16-19 September) and Bethlehem branch (17-19 September), which were closed due to COVID-19 infections among staff members who went into quarantine (three in Jenin, three in Nablus and one in Bethlehem).
- The operations team continued to monitor developments in the four Fields (Jordan, Syria, West Bank and Gaza) to provide updated information on the most affected sectors of the local economies in order to adjust work plans accordingly.
- During September, MD disbursed 2,197 loans valued at US\$ 1,404,524 in three areas of operation (Jordan 38 per cent; Syria 43 per cent; West Bank 19 per cent). In terms of loan values this translates as: Jordan 50 per cent; Syria 11 per cent (due to the currency devaluation of the Syrian pound) and West Bank 38 per cent. No new/repeated loan disbursements were made in Gaza due to the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown.

Microfinance loans disbursed in September 2020

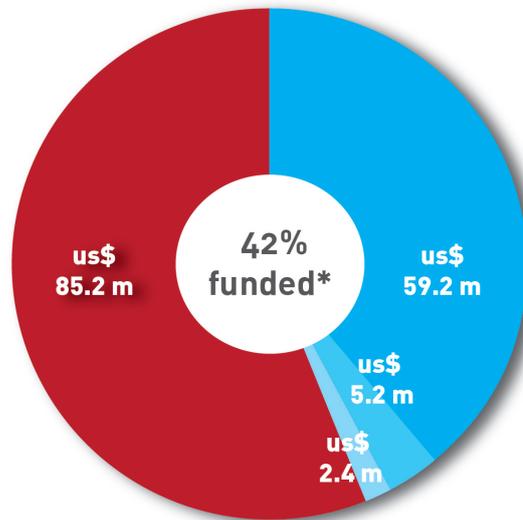


Priorities

- Gradually increase loan disbursement for client groups in need of financing based on the programme assessment of each field/business sector.
- Continue looking for interested donors to finance a trust fund that will enable MD to expand its outreach to targeted clients in the four areas of MD operations (Jordan, Syria, West Bank and Gaza).

funding

covid-19 appeals



us\$ 94.6 million**
current appeal requirement



Funding status as of 13 October 2020

* Percentage of confirmed, non-disbursed pledges and received funds against the annual requirement.

** US\$ 94.6 million is needed for the COVID-19 Appeal needs from August through December 2020. The previous COVID-19 Flash Appeal that run from March to July required US\$ 93.4 million and was 62 per cent funded. The Appeal overview includes pledges confirmed and received for both Appeals and since the onset of the emergency in March 2020.



united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

www.unrwa.org

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions

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