



## WFP Palestine Voucher Programmes

**The Voucher Programme benefitted 116,000 beneficiaries in 2012, and WFP plans to reach 146,000 individuals in 2013**

### WFP Palestine

WFP's overall strategy is to engage in partnerships to support Palestinians in three key areas:

**Relief:** emergency assistance to the most vulnerable households.

**Resilience:** using food assistance to build economic resilience by linking safety nets to local products and engaging in community works projects that promote greening Palestine and agricultural development goals.

**Preparedness:** support to the Palestinian Authority Civil Defense to plan for and respond to emergencies.

### Challenges to Food Security

Food insecurity in Palestine is driven primarily by poverty linked to the ongoing occupation.

Restrictions on freedom of movement, access to natural resources, the right to pursue gainful employment as well as on international trade and investment have left 27 percent of households, or 1.3 million Palestinians, unable to meet their basic food and household expenses.

- In Gaza and the West Bank, food is often available, yet is priced out of reach for many poor households. An average family of six living under the poverty line spends approximately half of its income on food, leaving many households vulnerable to the negative impact of volatile food prices and income fluctuations.
- To help poor urban families purchase adequate, nutritious food, WFP launched electronic food voucher programmes to enable individuals to purchase food in local shops.
- Families receive debit cards which allow them to purchase eggs, cheese, yogurt and other locally produced nutritious foods.
- This assistance protects families from engaging in negative coping mechanisms such as reducing expenditure on food, health care, education, or other necessities.
- The voucher program stimulates the Palestinian economy by increasing sales of locally-produced goods and supporting participating shops.



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## Programme Details

**Partnerships** are central to WFP Palestine and the Voucher Programme is a partnership with local authorities and NGO's, increasing the capacity of local authorities to effectively administer social safety net programmes.

**Vouchers in Gaza** provide around US\$12 per month per person, and can be used to purchase bread, cereal, milk, yogurt, white cheese, eggs, pulses, vegetable oil, olive oil, rice, tahina and wheat flour. In 2012, the programme reached 30,000 beneficiaries, and 60,000 people will receive vouchers in 2013.

**Vouchers in the West Bank** provide US\$13 per month per person. Beneficiaries can use vouchers to purchase bread, cereals, milk, yogurt, white cheese, eggs, pulses, vegetable oil, tuna, tahina and salt. In 2012, 86,000 people received vouchers and WFP expects to reach the same number of people in 2013.

**Participating shops** receive an electronic terminal, similar to a credit card machine, where beneficiaries swipe their voucher cards to purchase food items. This system allows WFP to track and analyse purchasing patterns, and ensure the programme's integrity.

## Programme Impact

- **Dietary Diversity:** Over the first ten months of implementation, beneficiary households with "poor" food consumption (a diet of mostly carbohydrates and fats, few vegetables and no protein or fruit) dropped from 24 percent to 5 percent in the West Bank, and from 12.5 percent to 0.9 percent in Gaza.

- **Boosting the Local Economy:** Participating shops have seen a 91 percent increase in sales volume, and sales value increased by 69 percent. This is largely due to a significant rise (approximately 150 percent) in the sale of locally produced dairy products.
- **Job Creation:** Many participating shops have been able to hire additional workers. In the West Bank, 43 percent of shopkeepers employed one or two additional workers on voucher redemption days, and participating shops in Gaza hired a total of 35 new employees.

## Investing in Palestine

All products available for purchase through the voucher programme are produced in the West Bank or Gaza. Increased sales of these products inject much-needed cash into the local economy. In 2012 WFP invested approximately US\$16.7 million in local producers through the purchase of voucher goods.



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