

Relief and Social Services



“We are grateful for UNRWA’s assistance, but because we are eight people in this house, and we have young kids who like to eat a lot, we wish we could receive more food aid.”

-Abu Kamel, unemployed Palestine refugee with a disability, father of six, enrolled in UNRWA’s Social Safety Net Programme, Arroub Camp, West Bank, occupied Palestinian territory.

Relief and Social Services

The Relief and Social Services department concentrates its efforts on the poorest of the poor Palestine refugees in UNRWA's five fields of operations.¹ The department aims to provide basic food supplies and cash subsidies as well as emergency cash grants and adequate shelter to the most vulnerable refugees. For 2008-2009 the department accounts for \$107 million out of UNRWA's regular budget of \$1.1 billion.

What relief and social services does UNRWA provide to all refugees?

- Various activities are offered through community-based organisations: Social, cultural, recreational and educational activities, including skills training sessions, for women, youth, the elderly and refugees with disabilities.
- Some 380 social workers regularly conduct family visits to determine eligibility for UNRWA services. They develop tailored interventions of assistance to help families get out of poverty, such as referrals to specialists for children with disabilities or helping drop outs to obtain apprenticeships.
- Social workers train Palestinian volunteers to rehabilitate Palestine refugees with disabilities and assist their integration into their communities.
- Micro-credit loans administered by refugees are offered, as well as training to loan recipients.
- Extensive registration services are provided with regard to refugee status, births, marriage, change of residency or other status, eligibility for UNRWA services, etc.
- The department safeguards, updates and maintains the historical refugee records, dating back to 1948.

What food and cash aid does RSSD deliver to the poorest refugees?

- Over 250,000 poor refugees receive food baskets and modest cash subsidies under the Social Safety Net programme, which focuses on the abject poor (food insecure).
- In the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip), the food baskets consist of wheat flour, rice, vegetable oil, whole milk powder and sugar, and account for 82% of an average Palestine refugee's daily caloric intake.
- In Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, rice, vegetable oil, whole milk powder, sugar, lentils and tuna are provided, comprising 30% of an average refugee's daily caloric intake.
- \$40 annual cash subsidies are provided to families, giving them the flexibility to make purchases according to their primary needs and to increase their likelihood of buying fresh food.



A family enrolled in the Social Safety Net programme that was moved from overcrowded Neirab camp in Syria to a new section of Einal Tal camp near Al eppo.

What other assistance does RSSD provide to the poorest refugees?

- Identifies refugee families in need of shelter rehabilitation.
- Preferential access is offered to UNRWA's vocational training centres.
- Higher coverage of hospitalisation costs than for other refugees.
- One-time emergency grants (\$200-\$500) are provided to refugees faced with situations such as a fire, flood or a death in the family, with priority given to refugees in the Social Safety Net programme.

What is the role of the Relief and Social Services Department in times of humanitarian crisis?

- In addition to servicing registered refugees, RSSD extends its services to non-refugees in times of humanitarian crisis, such as the crisis in Nahr el Bared refugee camp in Lebanon when over 30,000 refugees were displaced to nearby Beddawi camp.
- Over 700 Palestine refugees who fled the war in Iraq received emergency cash grants in Syria.
- Social workers interview the displaced to assess their situation and to help to develop relief interventions catering to their needs.

¹ Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip)

About UNRWA

Some 4.6 million Palestine refugees in UNRWA's five fields of operations – Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – are eligible for Agency services, including education, healthcare, social services, shelter, micro-credit loans and emergency aid. UNRWA employs nearly 30,000 staff, the vast majority of whom are Palestine refugees. UNRWA's operations are financed almost entirely by voluntary contributions from donors. The Agency's regular budget for 2008-2009 is \$1.1 billion, which covers the recurrent costs of the Agency's education, health and relief and social services activities. UNRWA's headquarters are in Gaza City and Amman.