World Food Programme (WFP)

Vision

The United Nations World Food Programme is the world’s largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

History

WFP’s first ever operation was during the devastating earthquake in Boin Zahra, Iran in 1962. WFP office was present in Iran until 1978 and reopened in 1987 to assist the asylum seekers who fled from Afghanistan and Iraq due to conflicts and insecurity in their homeland. Since then, the organization has been providing food assistance to the Afghan and Iraqi refugees residing in the settlements located across the country.

Work in Iran

Iran currently hosts the world’s sixth largest population of refugees. WFP has worked alongside the Government of the I.R. Iran for the past 30 years to provide food assistance to the most vulnerable refugees with a food basket consisting of rice, sugar, lentils, vegetable oil and wheat flour.

As of January 2018, the organization introduced a new transfer modality; a combination of food and cash assistance. Under this modality refugees will continue to receive their entitlement of wheat flour in kind and the rest in form of cash, which can be spent in shops and markets inside and outside the settlements. This combination restores the dignity and diversifies the dietary intake of refugees who are now able to buy food of their own choice. The new modality increases the efficiency of WFP assistance and is also beneficial to the community as a whole since the local shops in settlements are oftentimes run by refugees themselves.

WFP also supports the Government of Iran in emergency operations, by providing logistics services and food assistance when required. In March 2019, Iran was lashed by torrential rain which has caused massive flooding in most of Iran’s 31 provinces, killing more than 75 people and displacing thousands. In response, WFP delivered mixed commodities in the form of 12,000 family emergency food packages equivalent to USD $600,000 that would...
cater to the food and nutritional needs of at least 50,000 persons for one month.

The Interim Country Strategic Plan (I-CSP) 2018-2020

This three-year Strategic Plan with the overall budget of USD 18 million, will achieve its intended objective ensuring that food insecure refugees in Iran are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs, through two activities:

**Activity 1:** Provide unconditional food assistance to food insecure refugees; Food insecure refugees living in 20 settlements in Iran are eligible for WFP assistance using the new transfer modality of combination of wheat flour and cash to support their daily food needs.

**Activity 2:** Provide conditional support to women and girl refugees to incentivize and facilitate educational and livelihood activities.

The Strategic Plan will continue striving to eliminate the gender gap by focusing more intensely on supporting and **encouraging young girls to regularly attend school.** Girls who regularly attend school will be eligible to receive conditional cash transfers that will strengthen their individual capacity to learn and be more empowered.

With the aim of empowering refugee women head of households, a livelihood component targeting women with handicraft skills is launched through a start-up grant that will enable them to produce marketable goods like embroidery at no extra cost. In addition, WFP and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have established a greenhouse pilot project in Semnan settlement for refugees.

A woman’s income rises by 10 to 20 percent for each year of schooling, exemplifying the economic advantages that come from educating young women. Furthermore, the power of educating women extends to the future generation whose health, education, and individual capacity will benefit tremendously.