

# SDC FACTSHEET MULTILATERAL ORGANISATION



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Confederaziun svizra

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Swiss Agency Development  
and Cooperation SDC



## Facts and Figures

### Mandate

UNRWA has a humanitarian and development mandate to provide assistance and protection to Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including East-Jerusalem, achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, healthcare, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, as well as microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.

**Type of organisation:** UNRWA is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

### Institution

**Head of organisation:** Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini (Swiss and Italian citizen)

**Headquarters:** Amman, East Jerusalem and Gaza City

**Number of country offices:** Five operational offices in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and three liaison offices in New York, Washington and Brussels.

**Number of staff:** ca. 29,000 (99% locally recruited, less than 1% internationals)

**Established in:** 1949

**Governance:** The mandate of UNRWA is decided every three years by the UNGA, which also endorses its programme budget. The Advisory Commission, whose purpose is to advise and assist the Commissioner-General, is composed of 29 members and four observers. The Commissioner-General reports directly to the UNGA.

### Switzerland's financial contribution 2022:

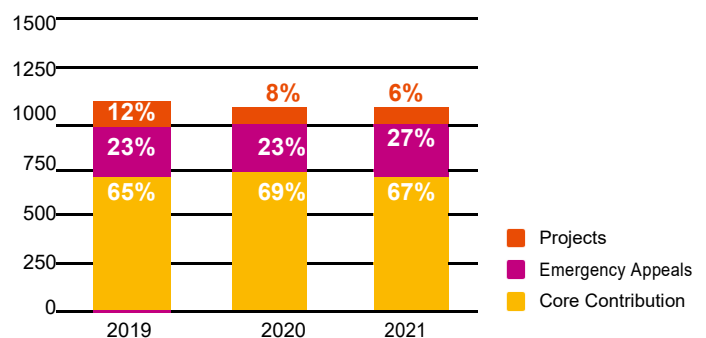
Core contribution (Programme Budget): CHF 20 million

Additional funding: CHF 5,6 million

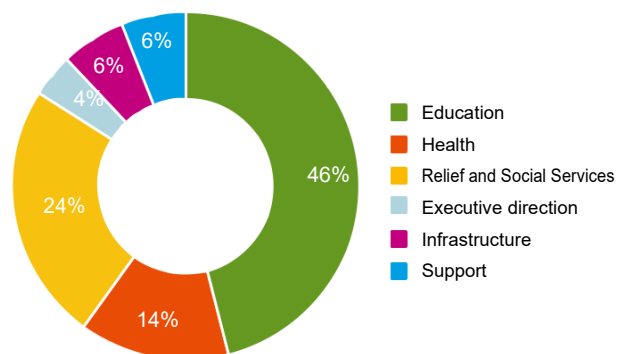
**Number of Swiss staff:** 8

**Website:** [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

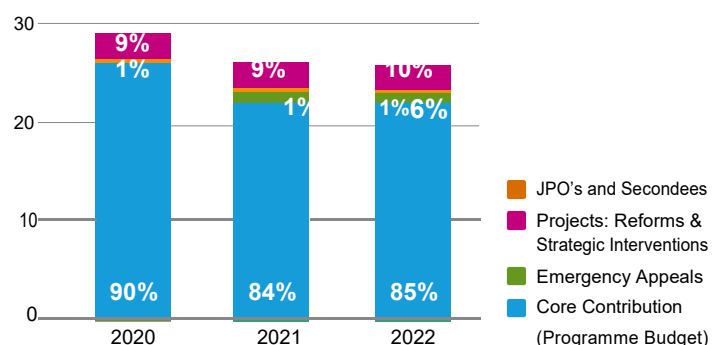
## UNRWA expenditures (in Mio. CHF)



## UNRWA expenditures by focus area 2021



## Switzerland's contributions (in Mio. CHF)



## UNRWA - FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES

Created as a temporary agency until a just and durable solution for Palestine refugees is achieved, its mandate has been repeatedly renewed by the UN General Assembly, most recently until June 2026.

The mandate has evolved over time in response to developments in the region and the changing needs of the refugees<sup>1</sup>. UNRWA delivers basic services in health care, education, relief, and social services in accordance with the United Nations' humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence. The Agency also works to strengthen its management practices to build an ambitious and diversified approach to fundraising, address key issues related to its financial sustainability and foster a culture of partnership with refugees and staff. The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of UNRWA (2017–2018) recognized UNRWA's robust organizational effectiveness, and characterized the Agency as a competent, resilient and resolute organization that attains humanitarian and development results in a challenging and resource-constrained environment. UNRWA remains committed to meeting its neutrality obligations.

### Results

- › UNRWA provides over 7 million annual primary health care consultations through a network of 140 health centres. The health reform, with its focus on a Family Health Team approach and e-health, generated improvements in terms of quality of care, cost effectiveness and high level of satisfaction among beneficiaries and staff.
- › Over 543,000 students attend UNRWA's 706 schools. Measures have been put in place to further professionalize teachers and enrich curricula to enhance pupils' competences and life skills, ensuring equal opportunities and outcomes for boys and girls and strengthening disability programming. UNRWA schools have built a reputation for high academic achievements including in highly volatile contexts (for example, rapid deployment of online 'Education in Emergencies' including during the Covid-19 pandemic), while achieving ground-breaking gender parity rates.
- › More than 398'000 refugees are regularly supported with a social safety net comprising food assistance – through electronic cash transfers and in-kind delivery – skills training and rehabilitation services. This holistic approach enables UNRWA to rapidly expand its assistance during conflicts.

UNRWA promotes **respect for Palestine refugees' rights** through advocacy and monitoring and through reporting of violations of humanitarian and human rights law. It also addresses cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable groups. Critical steps were taken to prevent gender-based violence with the adaptation of the referral system during the Covid-19 pandemic, including remote assistance provided through hotlines and WhatsApp check-ins.

<sup>1</sup>Palestine refugees are defined as persons whose place of residence was Palestine between 1 June 1946 and 15 May 1948, and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. When the Agency began its operations, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees.



A returnee to the Yarmouk Palestine refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus, receives some medical attention from an UNRWA medical worker at the UNRWA Mobile Clinic. © 2020 UNRWA Photo

## SWITZERLAND and UNRWA

Switzerland recognizes that UNRWA plays an important role in human development, humanitarian assistance and stability in the Near East. Switzerland has a long-standing partnership with UNRWA and has supported the Agency since its establishment. Switzerland provides regular core contribution to UNRWA's Programme Budget: most recently, the Federal Council approved a financial support amounting to CHF 20 million per year for 2023–2024. In addition, Switzerland makes additional humanitarian contributions to respond to crises (e.g. COVID-19 or violence in Gaza in May 2021) and specific contributions including vocational training (total additional contributions: CHF 8.5 million in 2020 and CHF 6 million in 2021). Overall, Switzerland supports UNRWA with a total of CHF 24–28 million per year. It also contributes with secondments from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit.

### Results of Swiss cooperation with UNRWA

In 2022, more than 30'000 Palestine Refugees benefited from essential services through the Swiss contribution. Switzerland works closely with UNRWA in the reform process. Its support has included major reforms in domains such as education and health, which have led to tangible improvements in terms of the quality of services delivered. Switzerland has also supported strategic interventions related to protection, staff relations and internal communication, all of which have enabled UNRWA to shape its responses to key challenges faced by the Agency.

### Switzerland's strategic priorities

In line with MENA Strategy 2021–2024, Switzerland's priorities are:

- (1) ensure the quality of services while respecting the UN values and humanitarian principles including neutrality and human rights;
- (2) support vocational training and employment opportunities for young Palestine Refugees;
- (3) support efforts toward accountable and transparent internal governance and monitor management reforms/initiatives. Switzerland remains committed and supports the Commissioner-General's efforts to implement reforms, to actively search for solutions, in line with the Agency's mandate, for financial stability as well as the work to modernise UNRWA's services

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