


[Inside MasterCard](#)
[Tools and Resources](#)
[MC Community](#)
[Project and Team Sites](#)
[People Place](#)
[Site Actions ▾](#)
[Quick Links](#)


[MC Central Home](#) > Making a Difference: Digital Food Drives Hope and Commerce in Lebanon



MasterCard and Banque Libano-Francaise discuss the merchant experience.

## Highlights

- Middle East and Africa (MEA) team visits Saida refugee camp in Lebanon.
- Experiences firsthand the impact of WFP e-card initiative on Syrian refugees.
- Program has empowered scores of displaced Syrians while also driving local commerce.

## Making a Difference: Digital Food Drives Hope and Commerce in Lebanon



Story contact: [Jandre Nieuwoudt](#) on: 4/22/2014

A world beyond cash is a world beyond hunger, and this vision is coming to life for thousands of displaced people from Syria who have found refuge in camps across Lebanon. The e-card [initiative](#) launched in collaboration with [UN World Food Program \(WFP\)](#) and [Banque Libano-Francaise](#) to help hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees meet their food needs has empowered scores of displaced Syrians, while also driving local commerce in Lebanon.

The success of this landmark collaboration with WFP was witnessed firsthand by our MEA team led by Michael Miebach during a recent visit to the Saida refugee camp. The team interacted with the beneficiaries to understand how they use the cards in their everyday life, its advantage over food vouchers and how we can make this tool even more effective.



Piloted in September 2013 for some 2,000 Syrian households in the southern Lebanese town of Nabatiyeh, the e-card program is now being used by almost 800,000 refugees at some 300 participating shops in Lebanon. Today, it is the WFP's largest electronic card program ever and the largest program that WFP operates for Syrian refugees. Beneficiaries can now buy the foods that fit their needs, including fresh produce, which is not normally included in traditional food rations.

A key aspect of this visit to the Saida camp was our team's interaction with the merchants who accept these cards. As a lady arrived at the shop and bought food supplies using her e-card, the shop owner remarked on how his business is experiencing growth since he has started accepting the WFP cards.

Globally, the Syria response is WFP's largest and most complex emergency operation, and the organization [needs to raise](#) US\$2 billion in 2014 to meet the needs of those impacted by the conflict. We will continue to work with WFP to bring aid to those who need it most, and have also been rolling out a similar e-card program for Syrian refugees in Jordan, where 150,000 beneficiaries have enrolled to date.

*Photo above right: MasterCard and WFP executives at the Saida refugee camp.*

### Tools

[Bookmark](#) | [Share](#) | [Print](#) | Rate this ★★★★★ (1)

**Tags:** [MEA news](#) [I like it](#)

**Keywords:**

### News Article Comments (3)

[POST](#)


[◀ Previous](#) | [Next ▶](#)

Help

All Sites



MasterCard



Lester, Mary