Dbayeh camp, located 12 km north of Beirut, was established in 1956 on a hill overlooking the Beirut- Tripoli highway.

It was originally established on a 61,450 sq m plot of land; in 1963, an additional 22,850 sq m were added. Both plots were rented by UNRWA from the monastery of Deir Mar Yussef, which overlooks the camp. Many of the camp’s residents came from the villages of Bassa and Kafr Berem in Palestine.

The ongoing Syria crisis has also led to the additional presence of Syrian refugees and Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) in the camp.

The Carmel School inside Dbayeh camp was closed in 1978, during the Lebanese civil war. UNRWA rented an installation in Burj Hammoud, where it reopened the Carmel school. Between 1978 and 2013, UNRWA vehicles transported the students between Dbayeh camp and the school in Burj Hammoud. In 2013, the Carmel School was closed due to a low number of students and there is currently no UNRWA school serving Dbayeh camp.

UNRWA in Dbayeh Camp

General information
- Established: 1956
- Size: 0.061 sq km
- UNRWA registered persons: 4,591 as of March 2023
- Total population: 1,772 according to the official Population and Housing Census of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon of July 2017
- Places of origin of Palestine refugees: Bassah, Kafr Berem

Main UNRWA installations serving the camp:
- Community and Camp Services Office: 1
- Health Centre: 1

UNRWA employees serving the camp:
- Administration: 1
- Health: 9 (part time)
- Relief and Social Services: 1
- Sanitation Services: 2

Education
The Carmel School inside Dbayeh camp was closed in 1978, during the Lebanese civil war. UNRWA rented an installation in Burj Hammoud, where it reopened the Carmel school. Between 1978 and 2013, UNRWA vehicles transported the students between Dbayeh camp and the school in Burj Hammoud. In 2013, the Carmel School was closed due to a low number of students and there is currently no UNRWA school serving Dbayeh camp.
Health

Dbayeh camp has one UNRWA health centre providing primary health care. The clinic at Dbayeh camp is only open two days per week and shares staff with Health Centre in Burj Hammoud. Health services in the camp include general curative care and specialized consultations, prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health, provision of maternal and child health, and school health campaigns. The centre receives an average of 41 patients per day. It also includes a pharmacy, a dental care unit and a laboratory for essential tests.

In addition, UNRWA covers a percentage of hospitalization expenses by Palestine refugees. The majority of them do not benefit from any external forms of health insurance and rely on UNRWA’s support. The agency supports both secondary and tertiary health care through yearly contracts with hospitals including the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) as well as private and governmental hospitals. Despite the support provided by UNRWA, many patients have difficulties in paying for their share of the costs.

Relief and Social Services

A core focus for social protection is providing Social Safety Net (SSN) support to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees to ensure that they are better able to meet their basic food needs. Assistance is issued quarterly to more than 64 families (147 individuals) in the camp. UNRWA underwent a reform to strengthen social service interventions through professionalizing its social workers. Through this, a family-based approach has been provided to support beneficiaries, helping strengthen their psychosocial resilience and social inclusion.

Infrastructure and Camp Improvement

UNRWA sanitation services include the collection and disposal of solid waste; the cleaning of roads and streets; insect and rodent control; maintenance of water; and sewer and storm water systems. These services were expanded following the Syria crisis and the additional influx of people.

In 2013, a main water tower, a water distribution network and a sewage system were installed, and roads and alleyways were paved, significantly improving the environmental health conditions in the camp. In 2021-2023 extensive water and waste water projects were implemented. However, Dbayeh camp still suffers from a significant shortage of water supply due to the national crisis and a sustainable solution is needed.

The electricity grid is old and exposed electricity wires are a serious hazard. UNRWA is not responsible for provision of electricity in the camp: a few hours a day are provided by the Lebanese national grid, and generators are operated by private entities. Since 2021, the cost of electricity has risen dramatically with the rising cost of fuel, making it increasingly out of range for some, and leading to changes in daily life such as not running a fridge or limiting hours of electricity at night.

Protection

Dbayeh is located in the Metn area outside of Beirut and is relatively well-integrated with the surrounding Lebanese community. Much of the Palestinian population is Christian, and as with other camps is mixed, with a number of Lebanese and foreigners residing alongside Palestinians. The area of the camp is limited and rent is more expensive than in other camps in Lebanon making it difficult for young families to settle in.

Dbayeh’s relative integration with neighbouring communities has traditionally facilitated residents’ access to services outside the camp. However, the ongoing Lebanese socioeconomic crisis and the end of fuel subsidies has made transport to services located outside the camp more expensive, with access to schools and hospitals a growing concern for many in Dbayeh.

Moreover, youth in Dabayeh who are often educated to tertiary level, express particular frustration at the high level of unemployment stemming from the combination of the economic crisis and restrictions on Palestinians right to work.

UNRWA works with partner organizations on gender-based violence, mental health, psychosocial support and child protection programmes. The Agency also provides legal aid and emergency cash assistance and participates in activities such as campaigns to tackle harassment, bullying and drug abuse.