



## “You can’t imagine how happy we were”

Project helps 3,600 of the most vulnerable Gazan families affected by COVID-19 meet their essential food needs



Using a CRS e-voucher, Jaber and his daughter select the food and living supplies they need most. Photo by Mohamed Reefi for CRS

Jaber is a 41-year-old father of five living in a small substandard house on government land in Khan Younis. Before the COVID-19 outbreak in Gaza, he worked in the canteen of a nearby school. Due to restrictions imposed by the authorities to stop the spread of the virus, the school closed for months, leaving him unable to feed his children or provide healthcare for his six-year-old son who suffers from a chronic condition. During this difficult time, Jaber bought items on credit from supermarkets and pharmacies, leaving him indebted without any means to repay his debts.

“We witnessed very hard times. For days and nights we ate only lentils and some bread from my neighbors,” Jaber said. The situation worsened when the family had to quarantine at home for 14 days after their neighbors tested positive for COVID-19.

“ I didn’t know what to do. I was struggling to provide food for my family and medicine for my son. He won’t survive if he gets infected [with COVID-19]. My son will be safe now, I feel relieved.

**Jaber**  
Father of five, Gaza

Jaber's daughter enjoys a trip to the supermarket with her father to buy vital items for the family. Photo by Mohamed Reefi for CRS



“After long months of suffering, my family can now enjoy a decent meal. I bought many food items such as legumes, sugar, poultry and frozen products.”

**Jaber**  
Father of five, Gaza

Thanks to funding from the occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund, Jaber and his family were among 3,600 families selected to receive electronic voucher assistance to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 for three months.

This project—implemented by Catholic Relief Services and our local partners, the Life and Hope Association and the Palestinian Organization for Development—enables families to buy food and vital living supplies from vendors across the Gaza Strip.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, CRS and its vendors have put protective measures in place so Jaber's and other families can safely redeem their electronic vouchers. CRS also used text messages, phone calls and flyers to make sure the family had accurate and timely information on how to stay safe during the outbreak.

Using the electronic voucher, Jaber can buy food and hygiene items, and refill cooking-gas cylinders.

“After receiving the voucher, I could provide items that I couldn't before. After long months of suffering, my family can now enjoy a decent meal. I bought many food items such as legumes, sugar, poultry and frozen products,” Jaber said.

“You can't imagine how happy we were when we received the message from CRS. My children started jumping. They were very happy, and are asking me every day when we will go to the supermarket to buy food.”

“In addition to the food items, I bought hygiene materials to protect my children when they go back to school, such as face masks and hand sanitizer,” Jaber said.