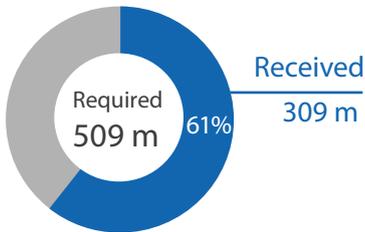


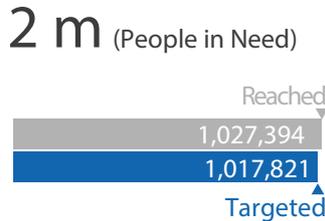


The dashboard summarizes the progress made by partners involved in the Lebanon Crisis Response and highlights trends affecting people in need. The Food Security and Agriculture sector in Lebanon is working to: OUTCOME 1) Promote food availability; OUTCOME 2) Promote food accessibility; OUTCOME 3) Promote food utilization; OUTCOME 4) Promote stabilization.

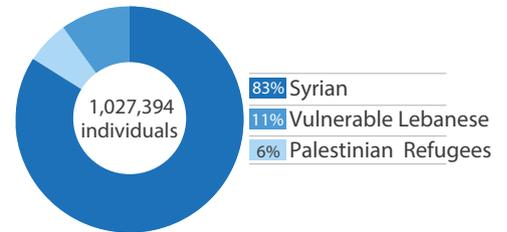
2019 Funding Status (including Carry-over) as of 30 June 2019



Targeted Population groups

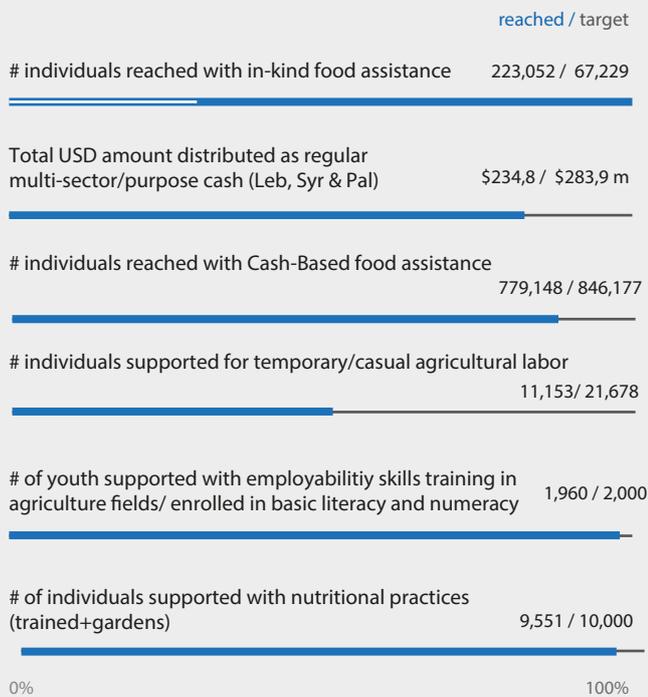


Population reached by cohort

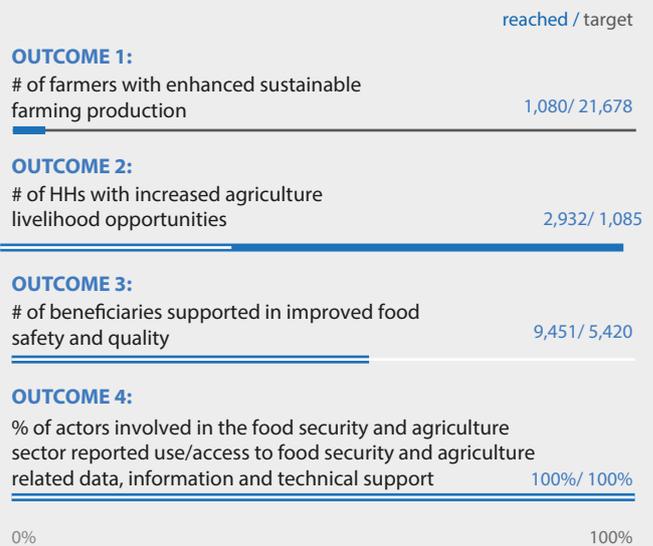


Progress against targets

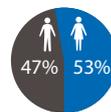
Key Achievements



Outputs/Outcomes



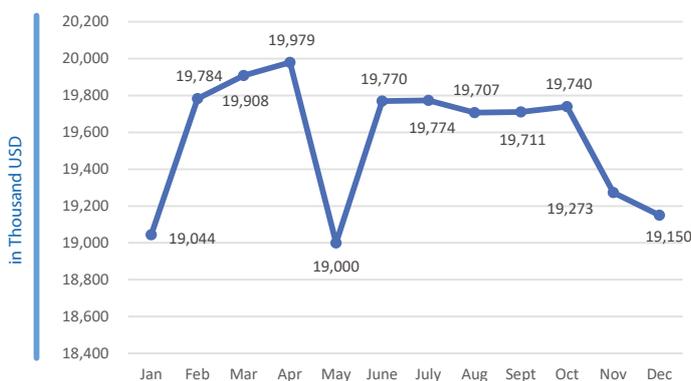
Age/Gender breakdown



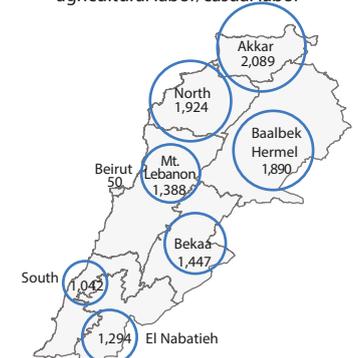
% of youth supported with employability skills training in agriculture fields/ enrolled in basic literacy and numeracy

Analysis

Amount of USD injected in the cash based food assistance system



of individuals supported for seasonal agricultural labor/casual labor





1. ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SECTOR AT THE OUTPUT LEVEL

The Food Security and Agriculture sector (FSS) has two overarching objectives: i) to reduce food insecurity by 2020 and ii) to improve the resilience of the agricultural sector to the impacts of the Syria crisis.

At the output level, FSS interventions aim at improving food availability and food access for affected populations. Food availability is achieved, among others, through the provision of in-kind food assistance and agriculture production support, while food access is achieved through cash-based food assistance and agricultural livelihoods interventions. In 2019, the sector provided food assistance, through in-kind and cash modalities, to a total of 1,002,200¹ individuals (223,052 through in-kind food assistance and 779,148 through cash based food assistance) out of a target of 908,206,² inclusive of all populations cohorts, reaching well beyond the cumulative targets set for 2019.

This increase can be explained by two factors: increased food needs during winter storms and food distributions during the holy month of Ramadan. The winter storms in January and February 2019 ravaged a number of informal settlements and collective shelters and left displaced Syrians with no access to food. As a result, several partners mobilized emergency funds and provided in-kind food assistance, which had not been previously planned.³ In addition, the main bulk of the in-kind food assistance was provided in May 2019 during Ramadan distribution. The higher amount of in-kind food assistance contributed to the emergency response and additional needs of the vulnerable population, exceeding the targets set for 2019.

In 2019, the immediate food needs (in-kind and cash-based food modalities) of 30,832 vulnerable Palestinians Refugees from Syria (PRS) were met, despite a limited funding to support PRS. The initial targets on food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese through the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) were exceeded by the end of 2019. By then, 91,239 Lebanese had benefitted from food e-cards, a 60 percent increase versus the target due to increased support to the government of Lebanon social safety nets. Furthermore, 8,536 Lebanese received in-kind food assistance.

It is important to note that 170,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees, under the survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB), did not receive humanitarian cash assistance to meet their basic food needs due to limited funding. By December 2019, sampled non-assisted households, despite maintaining their food consumption, had to resort to the use of debt as coping strategy and reported changes in the sources of income, possibly because of the economic downturn, decreasing in turn their overall expenditures to continue to meet their needs.⁴

Under the objective to improve the resilience of the agricultural sector to the impact of the Syria crisis, Lebanese farmers had the opportunity to attend trainings whose objective was to increase their skills and competencies on a wide range of topics. To this end, 942 Lebanese farmers were trained on sustainable agriculture production (crop and livestock), water use conservation practices, access to markets and on pests and diseases control measures. These trainings contributed to raise farmers' awareness on the adoption of good agricultural practices in all aspects of the value chain. In particular the trainings on water use efficiency encouraged farmers to use modern irrigation techniques (i.e. drip irrigation) that use water efficiently avoiding the traditional flooding method which uses large amounts of water and favors weeds and pests. Training results showed different range of adoption of water conservation practices with good results for the targets of the training sessions.

Farmers were also trained on the use of the Integrated Pest Management whose objective is to reduce the use of agro-chemicals in farming practices and pollution of natural resources (soil, air and water). The result of these trainings showed an important decrease in the use of the fertilizers for 10 potato pilot fields ranging from 18 to 40 percent and an increase in yield ranging from 10 to 40 percent. In addition, a reduction between 6 and 50 percent in the expenses for fertilizers was observed.

Furthermore, 138 farmers or members of cooperatives were trained on the management of soil resources, pest management and efficient use of water resources. The training aimed at supporting members of cooperatives in adopting and managing sustainable agricultural practices which will benefit their cooperatives and would have a positive impact on their products and helping market them with an added value. Always under the support to cooperatives, 41 facilitators attended a training on Business Plan Development through Farmer Business School (FBS) where 84 percent exhibited signs of increased knowledge in relevant field allowing 25 of them to be selected as facilitators.

To promote private agriculture investment, 808 small-scale farmers received financial grants, agricultural inputs and technical assistance. The grant schemes distributed to farmers mainly for land reclamation and water reservoirs construction through the Green Plan, provided new farmers with an additional source of income. In addition, 28 percent of attending farmers were productive in 2019 and this is expected to increase to more than 90 percent in 8 years as per an impact study done for the Green Plan. It is to be noted that the grant contributed to 42 percent of the farmers' initial investment and that the impact study showed a leverage ratio of 6.

It is worth mentioning that in 2019, nine Farmers Business Schools were established within the land reclamation intervention. The aim was to coach farmers on how to calculate profitability of their farms, keep their farm records, assess and find market information and make feasibility study and business plans for their farms. Training evaluation showed that the majority of farmers (>95 percent) were able to implement the FBS approach on their farms.

¹ The source of all figures is ActivityInfo

² This target figure differs from the 913,406 figure mentioned in the mid-year dashboard as the targets for PRS were amended from 34,000 to 28,800 under output 2.1.

³ That would also include a partner that mobilized emergency funds to provide hot meals to children in a community center when their houses were being dismantled in the aftermath of the Higher Defense Council's declaration on semi-permanent structures.

⁴ WFP, FSOM, December 2019

In 2019, under the non-formal education agricultural training programme, seventeen short-term course modules were organized and targeted 1,960 students (60 percent of which girls and 34 percent young displaced Non-Lebanese participants). These short-term courses offered new technical learning opportunities for youth (aged between 15 and 25 years old) in the agricultural sector, providing Lebanese and displaced youth a chance to access better jobs in the agriculture and agro-industry labor market.

The enrollment in the formal education (technical agricultural schools under MoA), showed in the first academic year an increase of 26 percent in comparison to previous years due to large communication outreach. A tracer study will be organized to assess the impact of interventions in helping students to access employment and fill the needs of the labor market.

Livelihoods programmes employed more than 11,000 individuals as casual or temporary workers, including more than 6,500 participants that built/rehabilitated small agriculture infrastructure and worked in reforestation/forest management projects. In exchange for their work, the families of the 6,500 workers, almost 35,000 vulnerable beneficiaries, received more than USD 2 million worth of cash transfers.

Out of the 11,000 workers, 4,570 (35 percent Lebanese, 64 percent Syrian and 1 percent other population cohorts) were employed under the land reclamation and water reservoir intervention. The casual laborers earned a total of USD 1.63 million.⁵

Besides, around 700 Lebanese farmers (77 percent men and 23 percent women) were part of interventions aiming at rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure and/or communal assets (including agricultural roads, irrigation networks, forests, hill lakes, water reservoirs ...) or establishing new ones, with a total of 442 worksites improved and almost USD 2 million invested.

More than 18,000 vulnerable participants attended a wide range of skill development trainings (digital literacy, market-based skills training, support to agricultural cooperatives and agro-food processing). Half of the participants benefitted from a food assistance for trainings programme, of which the majority was Lebanese (52 percent). Their families, about 45,000 vulnerable beneficiaries, received USD 3 million in cash transfers.

The sector takes stock of these positive achievements under casual/temporary labour in agriculture that provide a lifeline and skill development opportunities for Syrians and Lebanese alike. However, a significant gap is witnessed in the achievement of the other outputs related to direct support to Lebanese farmers, which has been constantly well below targets since 2017. That result pinpoints the challenges faced by the sector that are explored at length in section 3 and that can be explained here by the fact that the bulk of financial resources is targeting humanitarian assistance (in-kind and cash-based food assistance) rather than support to farmers, which requires longer term agricultural development interventions.

The food utilization pillar, under outcome 3 in the sector logframe, continues to have a limited amount of activities as there are only a few sector partners working on nutrition: 445 individuals were trained on food preservation and transformation technologies and on food safety and quality measures of which 72 percent were Syrians. The few partners that monitor results at outcome level, report very little improvement from 2018 in women's minimum dietary diversity score based on the Household Diet Diversity Scale (HDDS).

In terms of support to institutions, under output 4.2, the sector, through its partners, continued providing its support to national institutions and their staff, both at central and regional levels. In this context, interventions targeted mainly the Ministry of agriculture (MoA) and its institutions (Green Plan, General Directorate of Cooperatives, extension staff and agricultural schools). The Ministry of Social Affairs with its Social Development Centers (SDCs) was also target of interventions to strengthen system and delivery of services.

Support to MoA covered capacity building and trainings on: (i) FBS training sessions drafting the Arabic manual and in coaching the FBS implementation (ii) Monitoring and Evaluation principles, concepts, methodology, and tools; (iii) orchard implementation and on irrigation network design (iv) curriculum elaboration and development for teachers of the agricultural schools including competency-based training (CBT); (v) workshops on the ISO 9001 standards and establishment of a Quality Management System (QMS) to identify the necessary gap analysis, needs assessment and define a roadmap for the support and work facilitation of the GDC staff in the future. In addition, 29 government staff (26 from MoA and 3 from GDC) have been trained on FBS approach adapted to the cooperative work enabling them to facilitate sessions to agricultural cooperatives members.

At local level, a total of 113 MoA extension staff in the agricultural centers were trained on different technical topics such as the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices, Integrated Crop Management and on agro-climatic information and guidance to make agricultural production systems more resilient. These trainings covered the practical aspect of crops growing and not only theoretical aspects which provides the technical staff with field experience essential to confidently advise farmers in the field.

Institutional support to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM) was continued in order to strengthen the implementation and fund raising of the food assistance component of the NPT. MoSA is now equipped with monitoring tools using mobile data collection applications. Two hundred MoSA enumerators have strengthened capacities on data collection through four rounds of technical and operational trainings that have greatly reduced the time spent in data collection.

⁵ The casual laborers were on average employed for 10 days, with daily wage of USD 45 for Lebanese, and USD 31 for Syrians.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Up to **1,002,200** vulnerable individuals received food assistance, thus exceeding the target of **913,406** individuals using different Cash Based and in-kind modalities.

Beneficiaries included up to **657,163** displaced Syrians, representing **53** percent females and **47** percent males receiving food assistance through e-cards and food vouchers.

Up to **91,239** vulnerable Lebanese (equally men and women) received monthly food assistance through e-cards under the National Poverty Targeting Program framework (NPTP).

Up to **30,832** Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS)- **52** percent women and **48** percent men were provided with food assistance through ATM and food vouchers.

Among the most vulnerable farmers, **3,222** individuals were trained and provided with agricultural inputs.

Rehabilitation of agricultural productive infrastructure and communal assets have been carried out and consequently, around **442** worksites have been improved.

The total value of investment in agricultural worksite contracted through private sector or implementing partners reached **USD \$1,9 million**.

The Ministry of Agriculture is receiving continuously technical support through different interventions by partners and capacity building of its staff particularly through the agricultural TVET program for the agricultural technical schools and the green plan with its decentralized offices.



Facts and Figures

92% Of Syrians displaced HHs present some level of food insecurity¹

25% Of Syrians Displaced HHs with poor and borderline food consumption¹

45% Of Syrians displaced HHs depend on food vouchers/e-cards for income source¹

63% Of Syrians Displaced HHs adopt severe and crisis coping strategies¹

55% Of Syrians Displaced HHs unable to cover SMEB (Survival Minimum Expenditures Basket)¹

10% Of Lebanese HHs vulnerable to food insecurity²

73% of Farmers in need of agricultural support²

95% of PRS are food insecure³

References:

1- Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VaSyr 2019)

2- Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment of Lebanese Host Communities (FSLA 2015)

3- AUB / UNRWA 2015



2. KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SECTOR TO LCRP OUTCOME AND IMPACTS

The FSS contributes towards the LCRP impact under Strategic Objectives (SOs) 2, 3 and 4. Under the SO 2 of the LCRP (provide immediate assistance to vulnerable populations), 223,052 vulnerable people, benefitted from short term in-kind food assistance in 2019. Increased emergency in-kind food assistance during weather storms (107,633 beneficiaries of food parcels in January 2019) and longer-term monthly cash-based assistance programmes both provided a lifeline to refugees' families, and vulnerable Lebanese under the NPTP, for a total of 779,148 people. Furthermore, cash-based programmes directly injected USD 234.8 million into the economy through the e-card modality, especially supporting the local economy.

Sector partners increased access and availability of food to vulnerable populations, yielding results on their food security in the first half of 2019. However, in the last quarter of 2019 the economic and financial crisis with the national currency losing in the black-market 64 percent of its value versus the official exchange rate have been taking their toll on households' purchasing power. Between September and December 2019, the monthly average price of the food basket under the SMEB increased by 28.4 percent, from LBP 37,700 to LBP 48,400.

The abovementioned contraction in households' purchasing power has started to impact the food security of displaced Syrians. The preliminary results of the Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) conducted by WFP in December 2019 showed a deterioration in the food consumption of Syrian refugees' households receiving monthly food assistance, in particular a drastic reduction of the acceptable food consumption score (FCS) between July and

December 2019. The decrease in food consumption score is due to the reduction in consumption of vegetables, meat and dairy as compared to July 2019 which has been met with an increased consumption of the cheaper alternative. The deterioration in food consumption was accompanied by the use of negative food-based coping strategies and an increase in the use of livelihood-based coping strategies in the second half of the year. Livelihood-based coping strategies include purchasing food on credit, borrowing money, reducing health expenses and withdrawing children from school.

Under the SO 3 of the LCRP (supporting service provision through national systems) the sector, through the interventions of its partners, aims at strengthening the capacity of national and local service delivery and reinforcing the stability of public institutions. Partners continued their support to national systems through capacity building aimed at increasing the number of vulnerable Lebanese having access to basic services through national systems. In 2019, WFP deepened its capacity building support to MoSA to ensure the Ministry is equipped with the main building blocks to effectively implement the NPTP, the Government's safety net program. As a result, the programme was scaled up to reach 12,892 households, representing 91,200 individuals, aiming to reach 15,000 households by February 2020. Furthermore, WFP assisted MoSA in developing a digital verification instrument which enabled the profiling of the new household beneficiaries which allowed to update household information for the 5,000 households targeted for the scale up and check their eligibility to receive the food assistance component of the NPTP.

Thanks to FAO, AVSI, ILO, UNICEF and WFP support, the seven agricultural technical schools of MoA have now an improved curriculum and learning conditions: the Baccaauréat technique (BT) programme has been upgraded to provide student with higher quality education. The schools are being rehabilitated, through the procurement of technical facilities and other laboratory materials. The enrollment of young Syrian and Lebanese students increased by 26 percent. The support to schools will allow in turn young Lebanese graduates to have a better chance in accessing the job market, and will provide young displaced Syrians the necessary technical qualifications and official diplomas to use once they return to Syria. This is in addition to putting in place an operational modality for work based learning in consultation with the potential employers and project partners and draw up policy implications to the Lebanese government.

In 2019, MoA, with FAO support, initiated the dialogue on the formulation of the Agriculture Sector Strategy for 2021-2025 by organizing a high-level workshop under the Prime Minister patronage under the theme: "Transforming Lebanon's Agriculture: Challenges and Opportunities". The workshop aimed at paving the way for a clear agriculture vision 2030. It should serve as a framework for fostering the sector competitiveness in a sustainable manner, accelerating growth, and diversifying employment opportunities in rural areas. The process has however been delayed because of the political and economic upheavals.

The sector also supported the Ministry of Education and Higher Education through the provision of school snacks to more than 32,000 students, both Lebanese and displaced Syrians, enrolled in 56 public schools to enhance school attendance and retention rates.

The sector through its partners supported as well the North Lebanon Water Establishment (NLWE), to improve its performance and capacity in planning and management of water resources and better water outcomes to end users. Staff capacity building was reinforced together with the equipment of water quality labs and real-time monitoring equipment that generates water resources information at Water Establishment level and calibrate outputs of the remote sensing.

Under the SO 4 of the LCRP,⁶ the sector has been active in trying to strengthen the agriculture productive sector and expand economic and livelihoods opportunities in agriculture. Sector livelihoods programmes, mapped under an interactive dashboard and a brief, show good results in terms of assets building/rehabilitation, temporary/casual labour and trainings conducted, as explained under the previous section. Notwithstanding these efforts, the sector is far from reaching the targets set at output and outcome level on Lebanese farmers. Partners lament limited funding on longer term support to agricultural livelihoods activities, which limit the number of vulnerable Lebanese farming families reached and have a negative impact on their agricultural livelihoods.

⁶ SO 4 aims to "reinforce Lebanon's economic, social and environmental stability by strengthening productive sectors in expanding economic and livelihoods opportunities, benefiting local development and the most vulnerable communities and to invest in mitigating the environmental impact of the Syrian crisis".



3. CHALLENGES

While important steps were taken in 2019 towards reducing the food insecurity of the different population cohorts, meeting funding requirements is crucial in order to maintain food security gains and ensure wider coverage for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, of which 170,000 still do not benefit from food e-vouchers or cash transfers, despite their vulnerability ranking. While in 2019 the FSS was financed at 61% of its budget, the funds received for cash-based food assistance represented almost 80% of the total funds received, showing funding constraint for the support to agricultural production and agricultural livelihoods.

The sector activities therefore remain somehow unbalanced with funding and beneficiaries mainly benefiting from food assistance, although, as compared with 2018, the sector has witnessed an increase of participants to the construction or rehabilitation of assets and trainings. Notwithstanding, some partners faced difficulties in enrolling and retaining Lebanese participants in agricultural livelihoods activities.

The short-term nature of funding mechanisms do not always support longer-term initiatives aimed to improve the resilience of the agricultural sector to the impact of the Syria crisis and adequately support the long-term, structural challenges faced by Lebanese agriculture, cooperatives and small-scale farmers, such as building market linkages and supporting value chains development, which require time and investments. The performance of the indicators related to support to farmers and agricultural production as well as agricultural livelihoods in general, well below their targets, demonstrates this absence of multi-year funding.

The dearth of socio-economic data on Lebanese remains a challenge at the basis of assistance to host communities, made more evident by the economic crisis and uncertain financial outlook since October 2019. The current crisis compounds the state of agriculture and vulnerability of Lebanese and the bifurcation between the labor market needs and trainings programmes devised by partners. Furthermore, the crisis is affecting partners working on agriculture that face several challenges in programme delivery and running of operations, especially due to currency fluctuation and banking constraints.

In a wider context of limited resources for stabilization initiatives, the establishment in the last quarter of 2019 of regional working groups and the technical working group on agricultural value chains, in cooperation with the Livelihoods sector, aim to help partners to better plan for interventions and increase coordination of activities at field level.



4. KEY PRIORITIES AND GAPS FORESEEN FOR 2020

The key change in strategy between 2019 and 2020 is to ensure a more focused and structured approach to cross-cutting issues that pertain vulnerable populations. For example in 2020 the sector plans to set up a referral system for the sector on the basis of partners' available services for referrals to vulnerable displaced Syrians. Also, the sector plans to support the design of programmes that are more sensitive to the prevention of conflict and social tensions. The sector will also include a renewed focus on tackling child labour within the agriculture sector. This cross-sectoral focus is of particular relevance to enable a deeper and contextualized understanding of the extent of potential tensions and potential protection risks related to food assistance and livelihoods activities, which are very relevant in the current situation.

The unfolding of the current economic and financial crisis and its impact on agriculture and particularly on vulnerable Lebanese farmers, reinforces the 2020 priorities of the sector, already mentioned in the strategy. This crisis is negatively affecting farmers as it is more difficult to purchase agricultural inputs (e.g. seeds and fertilizers, other inputs) through seasonal credits, which are usually paid back to suppliers at the end of the agricultural campaign. In parallel, prices of agricultural inputs have exponentially increased and farmers are requested by suppliers to pay in cash and in foreign currency, which in turn makes it challenging for many of them to continue cultivating their lands, especially seasonal crops.

The stabilization component of the strategy and the adoption of a food system approach that focuses on agricultural value chains remain key priorities of the sector. The impact of the crisis on an already ailing agriculture sector will increase the urgency of allocating funds and resources to support the current agricultural campaign, to invest in multi-year funding for programmes to develop strategic value chains, notably in agriculture and food products, and to implement labour intensive projects that create temporary employment for vulnerable people and are of value for the food security and livelihoods of displaced Syrians and host communities. In this regard, strengthening collaboration as well as partnerships and mutual learning will be pursued in 2020 through the technical working group on agriculture value chains, in collaboration with the livelihoods sector.

The strategy already foresees increased food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese (through increased targets for the NPTP and school feeding). However, with a persisting volatile and unpredictable situation, concerns are growing that refugees will become even more vulnerable and more Lebanese will fall below the poverty line.

The sector will therefore continue to regularly monitor banking services, market functionality, food prices and the purchasing power of vulnerable populations. It will undertake preparedness measures including mapping the interventions by NGOs outside the LCRP providing food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese; support the conduct of assessments on the vulnerability of Lebanese and of small scale farmers and the enhancement of the technical assistance to the NPTP and MoSA, and to MoA for the formulation of the new agriculture sector strategy.

CASE STUDY

PLEASE NOTE: This story first appeared on WFP Insights. It was written by WFP staff Edward Johnson and it is published with WFP's permission.

Leaning on a card and a stick: Mostafa walked through the door at 9 a.m. sharp leaning heavily on his walking stick. He is 65-years-old and has lived his entire life on the outskirts of Lebanon's second-largest city, Tripoli. Life was never easy for Mostafa. He has always grappled with health issues, moved from job to job and constantly struggled to make ends meet to support his wife and nine children. In August 2019, Lebanon's Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) invited Mostafa to one of the World Food Programme's (WFP) distribution sites so he could be enrolled to receive support for his family. One humid September morning, he arrived at the El Mina site in Tripoli, armed with the ID he was asked to bring and his walking stick, which he is now entirely dependent upon.

Under the Government's National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), 10,000 of Lebanon's most vulnerable families receive financial assistance for food, healthcare and education through a white e-card. The technical system supporting the NPTP was developed by WFP in Lebanon and given to the Government. Currently, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is financing the food component of the programme.

WFP's local partner Lebanese Red Cross manages distribution centres in the north of Lebanon, facilitating access and the movement of individuals through the process. Staff are also responsible for giving briefings on how to use the NPTP benefits, whether in shops, hospitals or schools. Mostafa's back and heart ailments require treatment that costs US\$ 250 each month. His new medical entitlements will ease part of that financial burden. Individuals attending distributions of new e-cards are handed a list with the names and locations of 500 shops throughout Lebanon. They are shops which have gone through a rigorous WFP vetting process to ensure that they meet the highest industry standards and have fair prices. Families can use their e-cards at any of these shops to buy their basic needs, including food.



Inside the distribution centre, WFP and MoSA staff members double check that a representative from the right family is collecting the right e-card and pin receipt. Centralised databases are used to ensure no duplication occurs, ensuring the integrity of the programme

Adequate nutritious food is a basic human need. It is a cornerstone of the second Sustainable Development Goal — Zero Hunger; a priority for the Government and the driving impetus for WFP. With the US\$ 27 per person from BMZ, WFP is able to provide the means for 10,000 families to maintain healthy nutritious lives. These funds from Germany also significantly boost the Lebanese economy as families use their e-cards to make all their purchases through local shops.

Representatives from 300 local families pass through this centre each day. Only one family member over 18 who is listed on family identification papers is required to turn up. Later that morning, Mostafa left with his new card. He arrived with a stick for support and left with a plastic card he can equally rely on for support.

