



2021 End of Year SECTOR DASHBOARD

Food Security and Agriculture

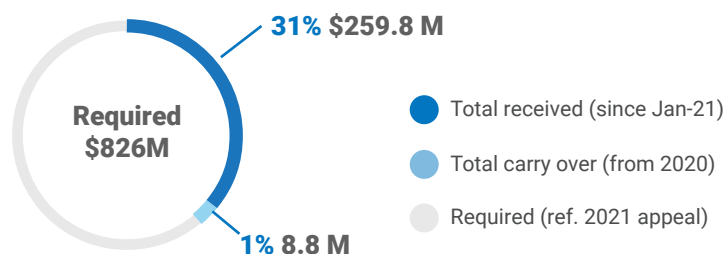


Inter-Agency
Coordination
Lebanon

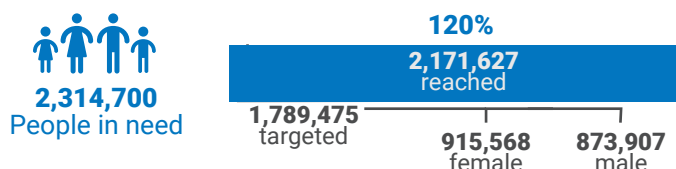
The dashboard summarizes the progress made by partners involved in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and highlights trends affecting people in need. The Food Security and Agriculture sector in Lebanon is working to: OUTCOME 1) Promote food availability; OUTCOME 2) Promote food accessibility; OUTCOME 3)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

2021 Sector Funding Status

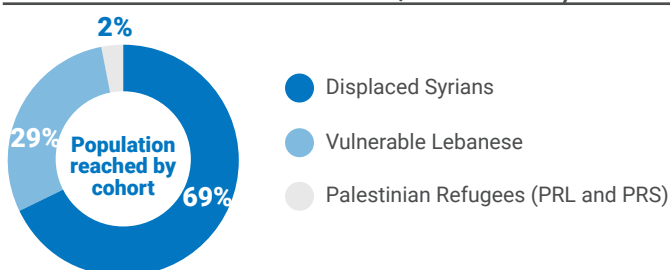
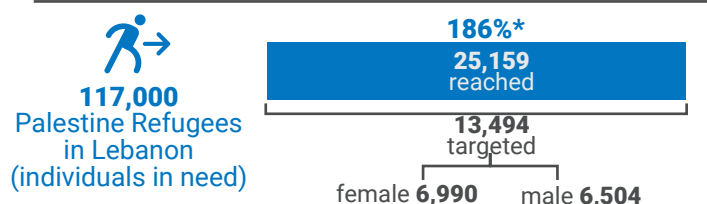
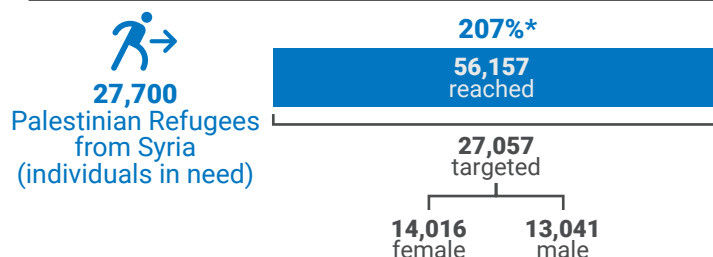
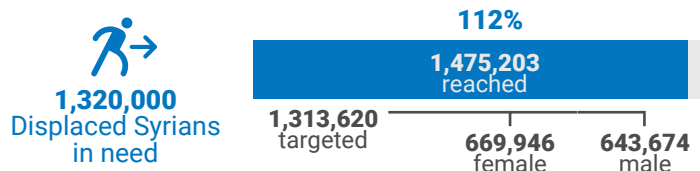
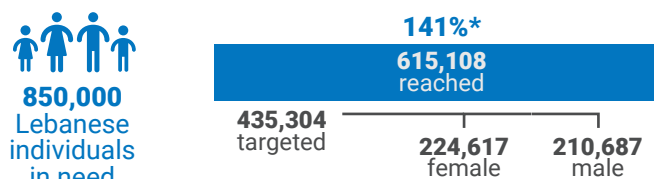
As of 31 of December



2021 population reached



2021 population figures by cohort



Progress against targets

Key Achievements

of individuals provided with in-kind food assistance (food parcels provided on a one-off basis)

572,156 / 125,947

of individuals provided with ready-to-eat food or hot meals

529,984

of individuals with access to cash-based food assistance (e-cards, NPTT, ATMs, Food Vouchers)

1,551,091 / 1,633,528

Total amount of cash-based food assistance (\$) redeemed (e-cards, NPTT, ATMs, Food Vouchers)

201,737,989 / 565,577,466

farmers receiving emergency assistance (cash or vouchers) to promote agricultural investment

1,413 / 30,000

of individuals with access to temporary/casual agricultural labour

31,204 / 13,340

of local agricultural groups/ associations/ cooperatives/ MSMEs receiving technical and/or material support

312 / 457

of individuals attending trainings on skills and competencies to access temporary/casual labour in exchange of Food Assistance for Training

9,300 / 6,500

COVID-19 Response

of food parcels distributed **10,294**

of individuals receiving food parcels **29,568**

of hot meals distributed **31,874**

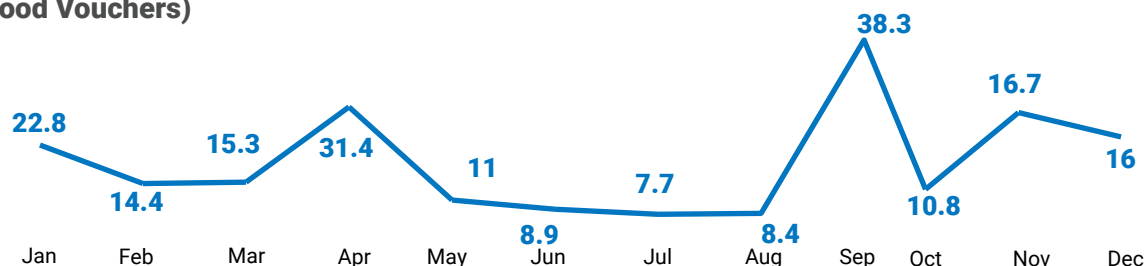
of individuals receiving hot meals **26,072**

*The number of persons reached corresponds to the number of multiple services/interventions provided and not to unique beneficiaries.

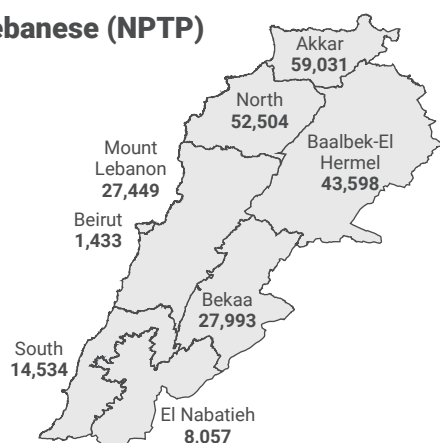


Analysis

Amount of USD (in millions) disbursed in cash-based food assistance through various modalities (e-cards, NPTP, ATM, Food Vouchers)



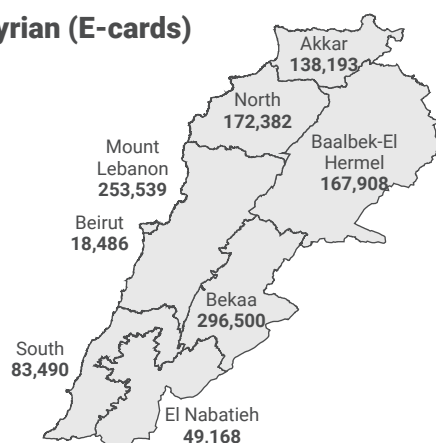
Lebanese (NPTP)



Amount of cash redeemed through NPTP (USD)

Jan 2021	2,210,158
Feb 2021	1,377,795
Mar 2021	1,376,515
Apr 2021	1,374,925
May 2021	3,277,026
Jun 2021	1,260,600
Jul 2021	1,626,756
Aug 2021	1,520,875
Sep 2021	5,754,916
Oct 2021	17,180
Nov 2021	2,953,537
Dec 2021	2,873,246

Syrian (E-cards)



Amount of cash redeemed through e-cards (USD)

Jan 2021	20,576,063
Feb 2021	12,939,625
Mar 2021	13,387,116
Apr 2021	14,646,308
May 2021	7,406,976
Jun 2021	7,462,453
Jul 2021	6,086,575
Aug 2021	6,909,480
Sep 2021	32,421,261
Oct 2021	10,648,303
Nov 2021	13,648,420
Dec 2021	12,956,975

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

In 2021, through the joint efforts of its partners, the Food Security and Agriculture Sector responded to the urgent needs of almost 2.2 million women, men, girls and boys across all population cohorts through life-saving food interventions and livelihood support. These are rooted in the four dimensions of food security strategy: availability (Outcome 1), access (Outcome 2), utilization (Outcome 3) and stabilization (Outcome 4). This figure represents a 44 percent increase compared to vulnerable groups reached with assistance in 2020, and exceeds by 21 percent the target for 2021.

Sector Results on Food Assistance (Outputs 1.1 and 2.1)

In response to the multiple crises and growing food needs, the sector partners supported in 2021 a total of 2.1 million individuals from all population cohorts with food assistance (53 percent women; 47 percent men) through different modalities (in-kind and cash-based). More beneficiaries were reached than in 2020 (plus 45 percent). This is a result of the increasing number of people in need of food assistance and the subsequent partners' interventions.

A total of 1,551,091 individuals received cash-based food assistance (51 percent women; 49 percent men) and 572,156 individuals (52 percent women and 48 percent men) received in-kind food assistance (food parcels). Syrian displaced people remained the largest beneficiary cohort receiving cash-based transfers with 82 percent of the total receiving such assistance (52 percent women and 48 percent men) as the escalating inflation and the lack of job opportunities are pushing 88 percent of the Syrians households below the Survival Minimum Expenditure basket (SMEB). At the same time, an additional 191,475 Syrian displaced people (57 percent women; 43 percent men)

received food parcels, representing 33 percent of total individuals from all cohorts receiving such in-kind food assistance.

In addition, the sector's partners reached in 2021 more vulnerable Lebanese in comparison to 2020 through the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP). 218,068 Lebanese individuals were supported (51 percent women and 49 percent men) with cash-based transfers (15 percent of total cohorts receiving CBT) and 352,476 individuals (half women; half men) with food parcels representing 62 percent of total cohorts receiving such support. The overall food assistance for Lebanese and for all modalities exceeded the 2021 targets by 47 percent. This was mainly planned considering the expansion of the number of Lebanese receiving e-cards through the NPTP and the partners' response to provide vulnerable population with food parcels.

Moreover, around 53,000 Palestinians (PRL and PRS) could cover their food needs through cash-based assistance and food vouchers in terms of cumulative number provided with services. In addition, 28,205 Palestinians received food parcels (54 percent women; 46 percent men). The in-kind food assistance to PRL and PRS increased by 34 percent compared to the 2021 targets.

The total value of cash transfers reached USD 201.7 million in 2021. The cash was redeemed through ATMs, food vouchers, e-cards and the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), the latter targeting extremely poor Lebanese and expanded to reach additional persons affected by Lebanon's economic decline.

It is worth mentioning that the established UNHCR/WFP call centre receives feedback from beneficiaries to address complaints related to several challenges and barriers reported with regard to assistance.



2021 End of Year SECTOR DASHBOARD

Food Security and Agriculture



Inter-Agency
Coordination
Lebanon

Sector Results on Agricultural Livelihoods (Outputs 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6)

In order to alleviate the multi-faceted crises on the agricultural community, the Sector also enhanced the technical and operational capacities of small-scale Lebanese farmers, through strengthening value chains interventions, facilitating access to markets and the adoption of sustainable and climate smart practices or the conservation of natural resources. As such, a total of 3,878 small-scale farmers (35 percent women) received support from the sector partners under the related outputs 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 and this represents almost 17 percent of the farmers' community targeted under these outputs (22,460). This underachievement is due to different challenges encountered during the year such as the lockdown in early 2021, related preventive measures (limiting the presence in trainings and workshops), in addition to the impact resulting from the shortage in fuel which limited partners support for the provision of adequate assistance and field visits.

In order to improve their agricultural and livestock practices, 33 percent of these farmers received trainings on different topics related to crop and livestock production practices, on storage and post-harvesting processes, on receiving agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and equipment as well as on veterinary services. Moreover, fifty of the 1,318 farmers received capacity building support to improve their access to markets. Additionally, 2,560 livestock keepers were supported through animal vaccination campaigns in close collaboration with the concerned department services of the Ministry of Agriculture which allowed to vaccinate 36,500 heads of cows against the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD).

Under output 2.2, 312 farmers groups/ association, agri-food cooperatives and/or agricultural MSMEs received in-kind inputs and technical support (agricultural inputs, equipment, capacity building, and business plan preparation etc.) representing two-third of the 2021 targets. Almost 592 members (83 percent women) of these groups received technical trainings allowing them to have a sustainable and profitable business plan for their agricultural farm development and managerial skills. It is worth mentioning that the sector continued to have joint regular meetings with the Livelihoods sector partners and a common [interactive dashboard](#) on agricultural cooperatives and MSMEs was developed.

The Sector's partners also carried out key interventions to support agricultural emergency activities and livelihoods, including the provision of cash or vouchers, in-kind agricultural inputs, training, technical support and labour interventions to promote agricultural investments. In this context, 1,413 small-scale farmers (14 percent women) received emergency cash assistance, for a total value of USD 277,688 to strengthen and enable agricultural investments through the purchase of key agricultural inputs to maintain production and farming practices throughout 2021 (Output 2.3). This figure is below the 2021 target (almost five percent) due to the fact that a fraction of partners' interventions under this activity, initially planned to take place in 2021, were delayed and re-scheduled to be implemented throughout 2022.

A Post Distribution Monitoring, carried out for vouchers schemes intervention by FAO, revealed that from the 30 percent of the farmers monitored after distribution, all were fully satisfied and declared having received the vouchers which were redeemed. In addition, three percent had difficulty in accessing distribution sites and 93 percent found that the agricultural inputs were of good or very good quality. While all farmers reported seeing positive the promotion of such projects and asked for additional similar support, 51 percent declared they would like that future interventions include some considerations such as higher value of vouchers, receiving other types of agricultural inputs and including local or closer suppliers.

Under Output 2.4, 125 youth (46% girls) aged 15 to 25 were enrolled in agricultural schools under the formal education and 129 young individuals of the same age (75 percent Lebanese and 25 percent Syrians) joined TVET short-term training courses on agricultural skills or related basic numeracy and literacy. In addition, 40 individuals aged 25 and above (70 percent women) received TVET agricultural trainings under the informal education sector. These results represent only 24 percent of the 2021 target, explained by the impact of the COVID-19 limiting the presence in TVET courses at field level and by the exacerbated crisis in the country.

As for the output 2.5, on the access to temporary, seasonal and/or casual labour related to building, maintaining and rehabilitating agriculture assets and infrastructure, a total of 31,204 individuals (25 percent women; 57 percent Lebanese and 43 percent Syrians) benefitted from partners' programmes in 2021 in exchange for cash-based assistance to increase access to food. These results exceed the 2021 targets for this output (17,000) due to partners' interventions related to cash-for-work activities within the context of the crises. As a result, 88 agricultural productive infrastructure and/or communal assets were rehabilitated or built up for a total investment value of USD 239,683.

Partners continued to abide to the government directive to have equal numbers of Lebanese and Syrian participants in cash-for-work programmes to support social stability. However, in some cases, partners engaged more vulnerable Lebanese to mitigate their vulnerabilities due the multiple shocks. Cash-for-work programmes contribute to generate employment and other livelihoods opportunities, particularly in the main agricultural rural areas where most of the host communities are located.

In addition, almost 9,300 farmers (70% women) - the 2021 target was 6,500 individuals - benefitted from food assistance for trainings programme in agri-food processing and basic literacy and numeracy (86 percent Lebanese host communities and 14 percent displaced people) which aims at strengthening trainees' access to casual/seasonal labour (Output 2.6).

WFP's livelihood programmes are enhancing social stability through creating spaces where both Syrians and Lebanese engage in economic activities that support peaceful interactions. Having people working together contributes to breaking down cultural barriers. As there are other social and political factors influencing the dynamics between Lebanese and Syrian participants, the Food Assistance for Trainings (FFT) and Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activities helped in establishing a common goal on societal interests over the interest of the individuals and groups.

On the intra-community level, the livelihood activities helped in absorbing the sectarian and political tensions among the different groups. For instance, the enrolment of youth groups from Jabal Mehzen and Bab el Tabbaneh in FFT activities has positively influenced the dynamic between the two communities. By the end of the activity cycle, they increased their sense of belonging and security and visited for the first time in their life an area that they did not have the courage to visit before.

In parallel, some individual disputes on sites have led to wider inter-group disputes and triggered a community reaction against specific group (e.g., displaced people) and interference from the municipalities which aimed to impose restrictive measures against displaced participants (requests to drop them out of the LH activity). However, WFP and cooperating partners have established thorough measures to mitigate those reactions and strengthen the roles of municipalities and stakeholders as promoters and partners in social stability.



2021 End of Year SECTOR DASHBOARD

Food Security and Agriculture



Inter-Agency
Coordination
Lebanon

Sector results on food utilization and stabilization (Outputs 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1).

In 2021, Lebanon compounded crises also increased the risk of malnutrition and adversely affected the diet of vulnerable groups including pregnant and lactating women, young children, elderly and people with specific needs. As part of the activities geared towards improving food utilization through strengthened food safety and nutrition practices, 353 vulnerable individuals including caregiver of children under five and pregnant women adopted improved nutritional activities and practices thanks to partners' interventions. These interventions aimed at increasing optimal nutrition practices through various Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) channels (Output 3.1).

210 farmers (only men) participated to trainings on Good Agricultural practices (GAP) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Such interventions strengthen the resilience of smallholder producers and upgrade capacities for sanitary and phyto-sanitary control and management of food safety and quality systems (Output 3.2). The achievement is far from the targets set for 2021, with multiple causes: the challenging year with the crises facing the agriculture sector and Partners' interventions to fulfil their interventions as planned, and the underfunding of the livelihoods pillar.

Under the outputs 4.1 and 4.2, in an effort to promote and stabilize food security by strengthening the capacities of public institutions and their decentralized service, Sector partners worked closely with their national counterparts to improve the delivery of food security, agriculture and social protection programmes and services. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture benefitted from the support and technical assistance of the Sector lead agencies, who are leveraging and strengthening national systems in

the delivery of social protection and agricultural interventions, respectively. The main decentralized institutions supported in the governorates included the Green Plan offices and its decentralized offices, forestry centres and nurseries under the Directorate of Natural Resources and Rural Development, the General Directorate of Cooperatives and offices, as well as the seven agricultural technical schools. Trainings provided to 70 teachers were on digital skills and teaching methods for hybrid online learning, technical agricultural topics and operation of two digital systems created: (1) the schools' inventory system, and (2) Agriculture Education Management Platform operation for students' trainings track and records at work based learning and Technical Bachelor education program. Furthermore, around 80 additional MoA staff from the different departments and agricultural centres received capacity building on different topics related to Good Agricultural practices and Integrated Pest management, on women cooperatives coaching and on conducting surveys on agricultural households for food security monitoring status following different shocks they are facing.

In addition, FAO is supporting the Directorate of Studies and Coordination in the development of the System for the Farmer registry Database to be implemented within the registration centres (e.g., agricultural centres) at regional levels. Around 600 MoSA social workers received trainings in 2021 on household verification process for NPTP.

The FSS is participating in the Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network and ensures to adequately convey messages to its partners, especially their front-line workers engaging in different type of support (distributions, activities, etc.) and their participation in related trainings or awareness sessions so they are adopting the PSEA standards and sensitized on gender-based issues.

2. KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SECTOR TO LCRP OUTCOME AND IMPACTS IN 2021

In 2021, the Food Security and Agriculture Sector contributed to the LCRP strategic objectives and impacts by linking humanitarian and stabilization interventions with the aim to address immediate food and nutrition needs and to boost the resilience and productivity of the agricultural sector. The Sector also contributed to raising awareness and sharing developments on supply chains, food and non-food prices, exchange rate fluctuations as well as revisions to the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket, which led to partners' increase in food transfer values.

Under **Strategic Objective 1 of the LCRP** – “ensure protection of vulnerable people” - the Sector, under the Outcomes 2 (food access) and 4 (food stabilization), contributed to the development of a safe protective environment for vulnerable populations. This is being achieved through cash-based food assistance and agricultural livelihoods interventions in addition to systems put in place by partners on accountability to affected populations, grievance redress mechanisms, community feedback mechanisms and referrals to ensure the safe, dignified delivery of assistance and “do no harm” approaches. The Sector partners' support to national and local institutions contributed as well to the achievement of this strategic objective.

To achieve this objective, during the COVID-19 lockdown measure in the first quarter of 2021, the Food Security & Agriculture Sector partners requested for referral of people seeking food assistance. In response, over 275,000 requests were referred from the joint call centre by WFP and UNHCR. Although the call for referrals was closed in February 2021 due to limited capacity for member agencies to take on new cases, requests for food and basic needs assistance continued to dominate partners' feedback channels. For instance, of the 210,132 cases (57 percent men and 43 percent

women) recorded by the WFP call centre, 48,331 cases (23%) requested for assistance due to the dire economic situation.

Furthermore, within the 2021 “Year for the Elimination of Child Labour”, the Sector supported national and local institutions in facilitating a series of regional and national train-of-trainer (ToT) trainings on “Child Labour in agriculture in food insecure and humanitarian contexts”. These trainings were carried out virtually between March and April 2021 with the technical support of FAO, to which a total of 100 participants attended. As for the national ToT training, 25 participants attended and were selected from the 100 participants who attended the regional trainings. All participants were members of the FSS, the Livelihoods sector and the Child Protection sector. These trainings contributed to strengthening practitioners' capacities to communicate, prevent and reduce child labour in agriculture, and help them integrate child labour into their food security and livelihoods programmes and interventions.

Under **Strategic Objective 2 of the LCRP** – “provide immediate assistance to vulnerable people”, the Sector met the urgent food and nutritional needs of vulnerable groups. This has been achieved through: (1) provision of cash-based food assistance that empowered participants while supporting local markets; (2) in-kind assistance as a complement to cash-based food assistance and contingency for ad-hoc/time-bound emergencies; and (3) the enhancement of agricultural livelihoods and income opportunities. Under this SO2, the sector partners provided immediate assistance to a total of 2,123,247 vulnerable people through different food modalities as mentioned in the previous section. In-kind food assistance increased in 2021 to reach 572,156 individuals with food parcels, while cash-based assistance provided a longer-term monthly lifeline to displaced families and vulnerable Lebanese under the NPTP, reaching more than 1.5 million people in total.



2021 End of Year SECTOR DASHBOARD

Food Security and Agriculture



Inter-Agency
Coordination
Lebanon

The impact of cash-based food assistance on food security was monitored by partners through remote post distribution and outcome monitoring surveys (outcome 2), that assessed the percentage of targeted households with borderline or acceptable food consumption score (FCS). The last results of WFP's Basic Needs Outcome Monitoring (BNOM) show a stable situation with a slow decrease in the food security, food consumption and use of coping strategies among assisted households. The FCS is used to classify households into three groups: poor, borderline or acceptable food consumption. These food consumption groups aggregate households with similar dietary patterns - in terms of frequency of consumption and diversity - and access to food.

A small decrease in acceptable Food Consumption score (FCS) for households receiving cash-for-food assistance within the Livelihood (LH) programme was recorded between August and December 2021 (from 38 percent to 35 percent). In the same period, a three percent increase in the poor FCS was recorded among beneficiaries. All households are still resorting to negative coping strategies to cover their basic needs. Households are reducing the consumption of meat and milk or dairy products, which could be due to the large increase in prices of these products on the market. While assisted families experienced a reduction in living standards that eroded the gains from previous years, the assistance provided protected them from slipping further into extreme poverty.

Cash-based programmes not only cushioned the impact of the crisis on vulnerable individuals, but also significantly contributed to the local economy by directly injecting USD 185.6 million into the economy in addition to 16 million as vouchers for food assistance, at a time when economic activity registered a widespread slowdown. Store owners who may have been forced to close during this crisis have remained open and in business due to the cash supply and customers were able to access local retailers.

Under **Strategic Objective 3 of the LCRP** – “support service provision through national systems” – the Sector ensured that vulnerable populations have access to improved services and programmes through strengthened national systems. The Sector supported government institutions at the national and decentralized levels, to enhance their service delivery capacities in food security, agriculture and social protection through strategic guidance, technical assistance, and policy and operational support to improve current and future interventions. In 2021, WFP continued capacity building support to MoSA to strengthen the design and delivery of the NPTP. As a result, support under the NPTP was scaled up to reach 36,345 households in 2021 (compared to 15,000 in 2020), while the initial plan for 2021 was to reach 50,000 households and 75,000 households in 2022. The annual targets increase are on gradual basis, which explains the 73 percent achievements against 2021 targets in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic and negotiations with MOSA on the procedures which delayed the upscaling of NPTP number of beneficiaries so to reach the 50,000 households.

Partners' interventions and support to MoSA were aligned to the Ministry's strategy, aiming at responding to the basic necessities of groups most in need, the social work and balanced development of geographical regions, and the promotion of partnership between private and public sectors.

In addition, the Sector's partners provided support to the Ministry of Agriculture (including the regional services at governorate levels, the agricultural centres and the technical agricultural schools) in addition to the Green Plan (GP) and the General Directorate of Cooperatives (GDC) and their related decentralized offices. This was achieved in 2021 through technical capacity building of 150 staff and trainings facilitators on different topics (such as the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices and Integrated Pest Management, post-harvesting, curricula of formal agricultural education, on

Farmers and Cooperatives Business schools approach), in addition to support provided to institutions (database and systems design.).

In addition, all interventions supporting the MoA are in line with the National Agricultural Strategy for 2020-2025 pillar in “strengthening the enabling institutional environment”, thus enhancing their services delivery capacities.

Finally, under **Strategic Objective 4 of the LCRP** - “reinforce Lebanon's economic, social and environmental stability” – the Sector strengthened households' income and food security by scaling up its cash transfers support, contributing to mitigating the deterioration of vulnerable group's economic condition and the erosion of inter-communal social stability.

The Sector has been active in strengthening the productive sector and offering economic and livelihoods opportunities in agriculture. Sector livelihoods programmes show good results in terms of assets building/rehabilitation and temporary/casual labour, despite current challenges, as explained in the previous section. As a result, a total of 48,380 individuals working in the agricultural sector (including farmers) were supported with various interventions contributing to their livelihoods improvements through in-kind support (agricultural inputs), provision of casual or temporary employment or through technical assistance.

In addition, in order to strengthen farmers' resilience, maintain their production capacities in 2021, and avoid stopping agricultural activities, several partners' interventions were targeted through providing vouchers for agricultural inputs purchase or through provision of in-kind agricultural inputs. Notwithstanding these efforts, the sector is still far from reaching the targets at outcome level regarding Lebanese farmers at a moment when small-scale farmers and local food production are in need of support.

In addition, the Sector carried out a survey aiming at putting forward a set of existing and potential community dynamics (conflict & peace drivers, stakeholder perceptions, peace & conflict impact examples) with which the projects can interact during their implementation. In addition, it aims at gathering first-hand, field-based information on contextual dynamics of those projects that support the food security and agriculture sector of Lebanon, through the implementation of various types of assistance activities (e.g., cash interventions, voucher systems, provision of agricultural inputs/productive assets, food assistance, etc.). Twenty-two partners participated in this survey.



3. CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

To this end, 2021 was a challenging year for the Food Security and Agriculture Sector. **Food access and availability were a major concern** across populations, with **food prices out of reach for most people**, and **partners unable to provide meaningful assistance owing to funding shortfalls**.

Increasing food prices and mitigation measures

The (national) average cost of the food Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) registered an increase of 821 percent between October 2019 and October 2021 with the continued depreciation of the informal exchange rate (USD/LBP). To mitigate this challenge, the Sector introduced a recommended food parcel content to cover the food needs of a family of five for a month. Several partners also adjusted the value of their cash transfers to meet the beneficiaries' food needs.

In an attempt to mitigate the adverse impacts of inflation and price hikes, the food transfer value was increased in September 2021 from LBP 100,000 to LBP 300,000 per person per month (and from LBP 400,000 to LBP 800,000 per household per month for other needs). Due to rapid depreciation of the Lebanese Pound, however, and to challenges to swiftly adjust the value of transfers to inflation levels, peoples' purchasing power remained adversely affected throughout 2021.

Funding shortfalls

Despite the growing needs, the Sector was under-funded during 2021, receiving less than one-third of the partners' appeal of USD 826 million and presenting more than 30 percent decrease in comparison to the funds received in 2020 (USD 381 million). Funds received are still unequally distributed among the sector's outcomes, with around 78 percent of the funds received in 2021 allocated to cash-based and food vouchers support to beneficiaries.

Conflict sensitivity around cash assistance As vulnerabilities are growing, this leads to increasing tensions. To this end, the Food Security and Agriculture Sector partners are working closely to measure and monitor the existing or potential stabilizing effects that cash-based and in-kind interventions have on inter-communal stability and overall social stability. In 2021, the main immediate cause to inter-communal tensions were access to cash (75 percent of the respondents of the UNDP-ARK perception surveys) and competition for lower skilled jobs (53 percent). In addition, there is a growing perception of aid bias within and between communities, where most communities feel that one group of beneficiaries are better serviced over another group. There is also a misperception that cash assistance to displaced people is and has been provided in USD (which is not the case), but this has caused social stress among Lebanese society. Several incidents were reported on violations against women and girls related to receiving services and dollarization. These tensions represent a risk for vulnerable groups and communities at large, partners' programme implementation and for the safety of frontline humanitarian staff.

The ongoing expansion of the NPTF – targeting poor Lebanese households - is likely to further reduce tensions related to perceived aid bias amongst host community members.

In addition, the Food Security and the Social Stability Sectors initiated the drafting of guidelines on Conflict Sensitivity for in-kind distribution aiming at preventing and/or limiting security risks and tensions, so that protection activities extend to all phases of assistance and ensure partners are providing assistance in a "do-no-harm" approach and applying the humanitarian principles.

Increasing fuel prices leading to challenges for population and partners

Fuel and gasoline prices continued to increase with a huge impact on households' expenditures, limiting the ability to meet their needs including access to food. In addition, the fuel crisis impacted partners' operations and partners reported that activities were delayed or postponed due to fuel shortages (mainly in Bekaa and Akkar). However, they have managed to continue their activities. Fluctuating prices and the removal of subsidies might have as well affected partners' support in some cases if not accounted for in planning and budgets.

In addition, beneficiaries were unable to reach distribution centres or contracted shops especially in remote areas, and they experienced problems in accessing ATMs due to power-cut affecting these machines.

COVID-19 Impact

Another challenge were manifold consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak on programming and implementation. Movement restrictions during lockdowns and curfews early 2021 slowed down the provision of assistance to beneficiaries. To overcome these challenges, some partners took alternative measures to facilitate the redemption process of beneficiaries and allow them to access the assistance, by changing the delivery modality. Such mitigation actions taken in 2021 included operational adjustments of the delivery of cash and in-kind assistance, such as staggered disbursements, strengthening safe distribution practices (e.g., home deliveries, outside camps), increasing the number of operational ATMs and maintaining flexibility to switch between modalities as needed.

In response to the increased need for food assistance, the sector reinforced a referral system building on the existing Inter-Agency tools to avail information to partners interested in responding to the identified needs. As a result, partners responded positively to these referrals and were able to step up and distribute 101,463 food parcels in 2021, which comes in addition to the regular monthly assistance to the most vulnerable populations.

Procurement challenges

As most agricultural inputs (i.e., fertilizers, agro-chemicals, seeds, animal food, vaccines and other veterinary supplies, etc.) are imported, the productive capacity of the sector has been particularly affected by increasing input costs resulting from the rapid devaluation of the Lebanese Pound in the parallel/real market and the disruptions in imports. Agri-businesses are pushed to conduct transactions in cash on the parallel market and consequently suppliers are requesting full-cash payments rather than the usual short-term loans and end-of-season payments. This situation context is pushing particularly small-scale farmers into food insecurity, poverty, and potential seizure of farming activities. Owing to the economic and financial crisis, cash strapped farmers have started to switch to lower quality substitutes to imported inputs, such as manure or compost for compound fertilizer and saved seeds for the next season. This has pushed the agricultural sector to move to a low input system, which is likely to result in lower yields and lower marketable production.

In this context, urgent funds are needed to support domestic food production and farmers, including through cash and vouchers schemes to access unaffordable imported agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, materials, and equipment). Funds need to be made available as complementary to short-term relief food assistance. The unpredictability of the prices and availability of material and inputs needed for building agriculture assets and infrastructure will remain a constraint in 2022.



4. CASE STUDY

WFP and its implementing partner Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU) funded by The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) were able to provide KhaldiyeH with not only farming skills, but also budgeting skills and marketing tools to grow her business.

The low midday sun strikes upon us as it lights up the field ahead. Scattered jewels of apples, cucumbers, tomatoes, and pumpkins peek out underneath a vast green blanket of grass and leaves. For KhaldiyeH, this piece of land she owns is her refuge. "Whenever I feel stressed, I come here to relax. It helps me forget about the problems I have outside."

Now a woman in her mid-forties, KhaldiyeH has been working on this land ever since she left school in the eighth grade. The lack of financial resources is what forced her to start working on this farm, and the lack of financial resources is also what force her to stay in it. After the death of her brother, she became the sole provider for her family of five: two ill elderly parents, an ill sister, and an orphaned nephew. It's a struggle, but she always seems to push through.



Figure 1: KhaldiyeH feels most at peace when she is working on her land.
Photo: WFP/ Dana Houalla

"God gave me strength to work on this land," she says as we move down the aisle of unripe tomatoes. To enhance her farming abilities and broaden her scopes, KhaldiyeH attended a training session implemented by the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and funded by The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) through the World Food Programme (WFP). WFP's livelihood program aims to improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries through equipping them with the proper skills and assistance to provide for themselves and their families. KhaldiyeH was able to go from farming single items and suffering from huge losses every year, to selling and promoting multiple crops and food items online through Food and Roots platform (<https://foodandroots.com>; <https://foodandroots.com/collections/all>) and KariaNet Reef (<http://karianet.org/REEF>).

"I am fully booked for the next two months," KhaldiyeH says with a big smile on her face. Besides farming, KhaldiyeH produces multiple dairy products, by which she prides herself in preparing the 'traditional' way. In fact, with the help of WFP, KhaldiyeH is in the process of establishing and legalizing a brand for herself, through which she can more formally sell her products.

For KhaldiyeH, the food she produces is more than just a source of income, or even a source of refuge. It is also a source of medica-

tion, especially for her loved ones. She explains: "when the inflation happened, we could no longer afford certain food items, and so I started growing them in my farm." Grown and cooked with the utmost care, eggplants, cabbages, and chard are a source of treatment for her ailing father. As he battles multiple chronic diseases that require special nourishment, KhaldiyeH makes sure to cater to his nutritional needs with whatever resources she has on her own land.



Figure 2: As KhaldiyeH struggles with the country's inflation, she caters to her ailing father's dietary needs with the help of her own crops.
Photo: WFP/Dana Houalla

Nevertheless, living in a rural area in Lebanon does not come without its own challenges. As is the case for many residents who live in this country, the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently the fuel crisis, posed great problems for KhaldiyeH and her business. The lack of fuel prevented KhaldiyeH from pumping water from her well unto the land. This led to the death of a few of her crops, seen wilting behind their livelier counterparts. The constant fluctuation in prices makes it difficult to generate profit when customers are promised a price that seems to be profitable one day and insufficient the next. However, and quite unexpectedly, the inflation was not all too bad for KhaldiyeH. It led her to transition into organic farming. This shift not only proved cheaper for her, since she was no longer buying the now expensive chemicals, but also provided her with healthier and better crops. From selling to retailers at her local farmer's market to now personally selling to loyal customers all over Lebanon, KhaldiyeH has come far. She continues to embark on this journey of hers, excited for what's to come. "The land provides me with an escape. It helps me look towards the future."



5. 3W Map at governorate level

42 Reporting Partners

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