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Lebanon



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NORTH AFRICA**

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL SECTOR

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Contents



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ix
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background and objectives	1
1.2. FAO's presence and priority areas of work in Lebanon	1
1.3. Methodology	3
2. COUNTRY CONTEXT	5
2.1. Agriculture and rural development context	5
2.2. Socio-economic characteristics of the country	6
2.2.1. Demography and administrative division	6
2.2.2. Economic situation	6
2.2.3. Legal, religious and cultural context	7
2.2.4. Gender indicators	8
2.2.5. Employment	8
2.2.6. Health and education	10
2.3. Policy, legislative and institutional context for gender equality	10
2.3.1. Relevant political commitment: International treaties and gender	10
2.3.2. National policies and gender	11
2.3.3. National gender machinery	13
2.3.4. Civil society and international community efforts to advance gender equality	15
3. GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL SECTOR	17
3.1. Gender and agricultural holdings characteristics	17
3.2. Gender and representation in rural organizations	19
3.3. Gender and agricultural labour	20
3.4. Gender and social protection	21
3.5. Gender and agricultural extension and rural advisory services	21
3.6. Gender and agro-food production	22
3.6.1. Fruit and vegetable production and agro-processing	22
3.6.2. Tobacco value chain and market	23
3.6.3. Organic farming value chain and market	24
3.7. Gender and livestock	25
3.8. Gender and fisheries and aquaculture	26
3.9. Gender and forestry	26
3.10. Gender, access to and control over productive resources and benefits	26
3.11. Gender, rural finance and economic empowerment	27

4. THE SYRIAN CRISIS: AN EMERGING CHALLENGE FOR GENDER	29
5. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS	33
Public sector/institutional actors	33
UN organizations	34
International NGOs	35
National and local NGOs	36
6. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	41
6.1 Key findings	41
6.2 Recommendations	42
For the Government and its institutions	42
For FAO	43
7. REFERENCES	45
8. ANNEX	49
List of interviewees	49

FIGURES

Figure 1: Status in employment for men and women	8
Figure 2: Occupations by gender	9
Figure 3: Average cultivated land size (UAA) by sex and age of the agricultural holder	17
Figure 4: Distribution of total number of agricultural holders by age and sex	18
Figure 5: Distribution of cattle (heads) by sex and <i>mohafazat</i>	18

Figure 6: Distribution of sheep (heads) by sex and <i>mohafazat</i>	19
Figure 7: Distribution of rural women's cooperative, by region and female membership	20
Figure 8: Average size of organic farm, by operator gender and production type	25

TABLES

Table 1: Average salary for women and men by economic sector (thousand LBP)	9
Table 2: Distribution of cooperatives by sector and geographical presence	19

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The Assessment was conducted under the overall supervision of Maurice Saade, FAO Representative in Lebanon. An initial report was prepared in 2016 by Abir Abul Khoudoud, Agricultural Extension and Development, Gender and TVET expert, under the technical supervision of Malika Abdelali-Martini,

former Regional Gender Officer for FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. It was finalized by Léa Berthelin, FAO gender consultant and technical editor, in coordination with Marie Louise Hayek, Gender Focal Point in FAO Lebanon, Elie Choueri, Programme Associate and alternate Gender Focal Point in FAO Lebanon, and Ranya Chaya, project assistant, under the technical supervision of Clara Mi Young Park, former Regional Gender Officer for FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. Additional editing was provided by Christina M. Schiavoni. Support to the publication of the final document was also provided by Valentina Franchi and Maggie Refaat, Gender Specialists at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADR	Association for the Development of Rural Capacities	IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics	ILO	International Labour Organization
CAWTAR	Center of Arab Women for Training and Research	IRC	International Rescue Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	JBDA	Jihad-al-Binaa Development Association
CGA	Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and the Rural Sector	LARI	Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute
CPF	Country Programming Framework	LBP	Lebanese lira
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
CRTD.A	Collective for Research and Training on Development–Action	LEDA	Local Economic Development Agency
CSKC	Civil Society Knowledge Centre	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
EGEP	Euromed Gender Equality Programme	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
ESFD	Economic and Social Fund for Development	MOET	Ministry of Economy and Trade
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
GDP	gross domestic product	NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
GGI	Gender Gap Index	NFP	National Forest Programme
GII	Gender Inequality Index	NGO	nongovernmental organization
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation	NOWARA	National Observatory for Women in Agriculture and Rural Areas
GNI	Gross national income	NSSF	National Social Security Funds
GP	Green Plan	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
HDI	Human Development Index	OMSWA	Office of the Minister of State for Women’s Affairs
ICU	Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria Onlus	RAS	rural advisory services
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	Regie	Lebanese Tobacco and Tunbac Monopoly Department
		RMF	Rene Mouawad Foundation
		RNE	FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
SEC	Sub-Regional Coordinator for Central Asia	UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises	UNSF	United Nations Strategic Framework
SMS	Short Messaging Service	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UAA	Utilized agricultural area	USD	United States Dollar
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework	WB	World Bank
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	YMCA	Young Men’s Christian Association
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund		

Executive summary

Lebanese agriculture mostly relies on crops (fruit trees, olive trees, cereals and tobacco), livestock (sheep, goats and poultry) and dairy production. The agricultural sector contributed 3 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and employed 3.6 percent of the active working population in 2018, constituting the main source of income for a significant part of the population. At the same time, among major economic sectors, agriculture has the highest rate of those in poverty (40 percent) and the highest rate of informal employment (85 percent), comprised mostly of women.

Making up 43 percent of the agricultural labour force, the contribution of women to agriculture is notable. Food processing tasks are largely female-dominated, and women also participate in paid agricultural tasks such as harvesting, weeding and post-harvesting activities. Gender disparities are prevalent in agricultural wages, however; women are often paid two-thirds to one-half of the wages paid to men for the same number of hours. Additionally, women are involved in many other tasks that are largely invisible and often financially and socially unrecognized, leading to the issue of unpaid labour work among women and other challenges such as lack of social protection. The capacity of women to juggle multiple types of agricultural work, along with their many household duties, illustrates the importance of engaging women in rural development and recognizing their work at different levels of interventions.

Women's access to both productive resources and services is limited. In terms of land access and ownership, social norms generally prevent women from buying or inheriting land, especially agricultural land, and the traditional rule is to pass it down from father to son. Technical trainings, technologies and extension services, when accessible, do not specifically target women's needs. Improving access to more gender-sensitive technologies and other factors of production,

together with capacity building, empowerment and skill development interventions, would go a long way toward boosting women's productivity while relieving their work burdens.

In rural areas, decision-making power on agricultural labour and related activities is mostly limited to men, despite the active role of women in carrying out the work. When it comes to domestic tasks such as house cleaning and childcare, however, decision-making power is female-dominated.

Lebanon has signed and ratified most significant international conventions protecting women's rights and has implemented them through multiple national and sectorial strategies, such as the National Ten-Year Strategy for Women (2011–2021) and related action plans developed by the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW). The assignment of gender focal points dispatched throughout the entire territory by multiple ministries and other public institutions contributes to raising awareness of gender issues and incorporating a gender approach in policies. Nevertheless, there are still too few measures addressing the specific needs of women in agriculture or of rural women in general, underscoring the high necessity of developing gender-sensitive agriculture policies.

Most interventions by international stakeholders have focused on addressing women's issues from human rights perspectives and not from the perspectives of economic participation or business development. Furthermore, projects targeting rural women typically focus more on their household duties than on their productive role in the agricultural sector. Additionally, such interventions tend to suffer from a lack of cooperation among stakeholders, sometimes leading to unnecessary duplication.

Without a systematic gender analysis at all levels of agricultural and rural policy, the role of women will remain officially unrecognized and undervalued.

The production and collection of sex-disaggregated data in rural areas would significantly facilitate the development of projects adapted to the real needs of rural women. Gender mainstreaming across relevant institutions through specific trainings and awareness raising is similarly needed.

This Assessment concludes with the following recommendations for the Government of Lebanon and FAO.

For the Government and its institutions

- » Improve cooperation and communication on gender issues among ministries, NCLW and active civil society and international organizations;
- » Reinforce the role of gender focal points in ministries and other public institutions to ensure effective gender mainstreaming;
- » Develop gender-sensitive agriculture policies that address the specific needs of the rural population, particularly the empowerment of rural women, in compliance with Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- » Promote the integration of sex-disaggregated data in agricultural and rural-related statistics, studies and other knowledge products;
- » Encourage and capacitate women to be further engaged in rural women's organizations such as cooperatives and associations;
- » Reinforce capacity building on gender mainstreaming and tailor training and extension programmes to the specific needs of women agricultural workers;
- » Recognize the scope of rural women's involvement in agro-food value chains, including their involvement in crop production, livestock and fishing activities as agricultural producers in their own right, and promote their access to the entire value chain, especially commercial opportunities;
- » Improve rural women's access to finance, land, agricultural production inputs, extension services and participation in decision making in rural areas;
- » Further develop and improve extension services, particularly with regard to technology and human

and financial resources, in order to better reach and serve rural women;

- » Strengthen the role of women within promising value chains and markets such as organic farming by facilitating certification processes and providing entrepreneurship education, business development services and other relevant capacity development;
- » Include gender analysis in all projects;
- » Establish policies and legal measures to address the existing gaps between men and women, such as the pay gap in the agricultural sector;
- » At the policy level, make changes to labour law and personal status law to create an enabling environment for the economic integration and success of women;
- » At the community level, organize awareness campaigns on women's roles, capacities and rights, targeted to both men and women, to promote women's economic empowerment and break stereotypes; and
- » To effectively tackle gender issues related to the current refugee crisis, facilitate monitoring of the food security interventions implemented under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), with a focus on the different needs of specific affected populations, including women.

For FAO

- » Include gender analysis in the Country Programming Framework;
- » Support the Ministry of Agriculture to include specific actions addressing gender issues and rural women's empowerment in its upcoming 5 Year Agricultural Strategy (2021–2025);
- » Provide policy advice and support to the Government in generating concrete proposals for institutional arrangements and comprehensive guidelines and procedures that enhance the participation of rural women in agriculture and rural development governance;
- » Conduct a gender equality stocktaking exercise within the FAO country office to provide a basis for better implementation of gender mainstreaming, including in processes and performance measures;

- » Incorporate gender analysis into the formulation of field programmes and projects, focusing on gender mainstreaming and women-targeted interventions;
- » Support the generation, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data in agriculture, with particular emphasis on agricultural censuses, rural household surveys and other data sources related to agriculture and food security.
- » Establish/strengthen partnerships with other UN agencies, international organizations, relevant national institutions and civil society groups in the areas of agriculture and rural development to ensure learning, exchange, coordination and cooperation, together with the ministries working with rural areas and the NCLW;
- » Develop and implement an advocacy and awareness raising strategy on gender equality targeted to rural communities that disseminates success stories and good practices from the country and regional levels;
- » Integrate practical methods and tools for gender mainstreaming into FAO training materials, possibly along thematic areas reflecting the projects implemented by FAO; and
- » Support the Government in enhancing the capacity of its institutions both in using sex-disaggregated statistics and in formulating gender-sensitive agricultural and rural development policies.



Members of a cooperative from South Lebanon part of the FAO project "Support to Women's Cooperatives and Associations in the Agri-food Sector in Lebanon" known as the "Raidat El Rif", funded by Canada and implemented in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. The project aims to support women's cooperatives and associations by promoting a social and cultural environment that enables women's economic empowerment while also increasing the opportunity for these cooperatives and associations to participate in local economies to establish or expand agri-food income-generating enterprises.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and objectives

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has recognized the importance of gender equality both as a human right with value in and of itself and for the achievement of its mandate to eradicate hunger and poverty worldwide by raising levels of nutrition, improving agricultural productivity and natural resource management, and improving the lives of the rural population.

The FAO Policy on Gender Equality identifies gender mainstreaming and women-targeted actions as a twofold strategy for the achievement of gender equality in the agricultural and rural sector. In this regard, the Policy sets out a number of minimum standards for gender mainstreaming. These include the requirement to undertake a Country Gender Assessment (CGA) to assess the specific roles and responsibilities that women and men perform in the agriculture and agri-food sector, and to document the gender inequalities that persist, with particular attention to those related to the access and control over agricultural assets and resources (land, water, technologies), information and knowledge, services (financial and non-financial), decent employment opportunities and markets.

More specifically, the objectives of the CGA are to:

- » inform gender-sensitive planning and programming of FAO at the country level, in particular the formulation and revision of the Country Programming Framework (CPF), in alignment with national priorities and FAO's mandate;
- » facilitate FAO's contribution to the implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), particularly with regards to the rights of rural women;

- » facilitate FAO's contribution to the formulation and implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, formerly UNDAF), by providing up-to-date information on the situation of rural women in the country.

Overall, in providing background information and some baseline data with essential gender-related information, this Assessment aims to be a tool for the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE) to more effectively mainstream the perspective of gender and the empowerment of rural women in future projects and programmes in the country.

1.2. FAO's presence and priority areas of work in Lebanon

Lebanon joined FAO in 1945 as a founding member of the Organization. Since the establishment in 1977 of its country office in Lebanon, FAO has focused on the promotion of sustainable development of the agriculture sector in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant ministries. More recently, FAO has been supporting the coordination and planning mechanism for humanitarian assistance to Lebanon in the context of the Syrian crisis.

A longstanding area of involvement of FAO in Lebanon is its contribution to the agriculture census project conducted with the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) in two different time reference periods (1998 and 2010), providing support in the results publication. FAO similarly supports MOA in annual production surveys and some thematic studies¹. Additionally, in line with the recommendations contained in the most recent CPF, in 2019-2020, FAO has been assisting MOA in updating the National Agricultural Strategy and in preparing a new Action Plan for 2020-2024.

¹ All are published on MOA website at www.agriculture.gov.lb.

Gender-focused projects have been and continue to be implemented by FAO in various areas, including support of dairy processing activities by women in 2016–2017 (GCP/LEB/024/ITA) and support to women's cooperatives and associations in Lebanon's agri-food sector at present (2019–2021), involving numerous stakeholders (GCP /LEB/030/CAN). Additionally, other projects directly benefit women through specific trainings,² and gender is mainstreamed in most of FAO's projects in Lebanon, including in areas traditionally reserved for men such as forestry, irrigation and water management.³ FAO has also addressed gender-specific considerations in agricultural technical education by mainstreaming gender learning across the curricula and teaching methods. School management and operation regulations have updated with gender-sensitive language and to include affirmative action addressing gender disparities and equity issues for both teachers and student. Gender-sensitive attitudes and behaviour have been promoted among school staff, and men and women are granted equal opportunity for professional development, training for career progression and taking positions in school committees and boards.

In 2019, FAO Lebanon conducted an internal survey on gender awareness and capacity assessment needs for gender mainstreaming. Thirty-two out of 36 FAO staff members in Lebanon completed it. Among the key findings were that 40 percent of the respondents understand gender-related concepts and are able to apply them in their work, while a large majority consider addressing gender equality issues as very important for achieving quality work outcomes. However, while most had undergone and introductory gender training, 71 percent of the staff respondents had not received any further gender trainings within the last couple of years, highlighting the need for more gender capacity building. Regarding training format, face-to-face trainings and workshops are preferred, and the respondents indicated the need to receive gender trainings in research/project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Regarding the above, a noteworthy recent development was the conducting of gender equality workshops between December 2019 and February 2020 to build the skills and knowledge on gender

issues among FAO staff to boost the quality of programme delivery from a gender perspective. In total, four trainings took place, articulated in seven specific modules.⁴

The Lebanon Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2016–2019 (FAO, 2016a) addresses the priorities identified under the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) Strategy 2015–2019 (MOA, 2014) as well as the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan/Food Security Strategic Response Plan 2015–16 (Government of Lebanon and United Nations, 2015). The CPF is articulated along the following two priorities:

1. Expand economic and livelihood opportunities benefiting local economies and the most vulnerable communities.
2. Improve the performance of the agricultural sector in contributing to the economic, social, environmental and sustainable rural development of Lebanon.

Outputs of priority 1 are to strengthen resilience of smallholder producers, upgrade sanitary and phytosanitary capacities and develop national institutions in response to crisis.

Outputs of priority 2 are to support improved sustainable agricultural production, implement initiatives for forest/land/water management, develop capacities in data and policy support, and develop efficient and sustainable agro-food chains.

The CPF, furthermore, focuses on seven areas⁵ and mainstreams several cross-cutting issues, including gender and information and knowledge exchange.

² See, for example, project TCP/SNO/3501 on food loss reduction in the Middle East.

³ See, for example, project TCP/LEB/3503 on reforestation in Lebanon.

⁴ Modules covered: 1) gender equality in agriculture; 2) international human rights frameworks; 3) gender concepts and terminologies; 4) gender analysis, concepts, frameworks and tools; 5) gender integration in the agricultural and food sector; 6) gender mainstreaming; and 7) gender in monitoring and evaluation.

⁵ 1) Food security and resilience of the agricultural sector; 2) sanitary and phytosanitary control and food safety; 3) food security and nutrition information; 4) sustainable agricultural production; 5) sustainable natural resources management; 6) data and policy support in agriculture, including strengthening of social protection systems; and 7) agricultural value chains development.

1.3. Methodology

The methodology for this study consisted of three main components. First, a desk review of available secondary information on the gender equality situation of the country, with a focus on agriculture and rural development, was conducted. Materials reviewed included:

- » gender-related reports connected to international conventions, the UN and other international and national development agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (CEDAW report, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, USAID, European Union, FAO, WB, ESCWA, OECD, Social Impact, etc.);
- » local studies, research papers, reports and assessments by various NGOs and companies (see reference list);
- » MOA's strategic plan (2015–2019) and its National Forest Programme (2015–2025) and relevant unpublished reports;
- » the social strategy and gender mainstreaming strategy recently elaborated by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA);
- » agricultural census results of MOA conducted in 2010 and published in 2012;
- » Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) national accounts and related surveys;
- » Central Bank of Lebanon quarterly reports for data on finance; and
- » RNE previous FAO Lebanon Gender Audit report and RNE draft action plan for gender (Institutionalization of Gender Mainstreaming in FAO RNE and Five Country Offices – Consolidated Plan of Action).

Second, in addition to secondary data collection through the desk review, primary data was generated using the MOA database on organic operator registrations at the Directorate of Plant Resources Plant Protection Department.

Third and finally, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 key stakeholders, including extension agents, gender practitioners, civil society representatives and (male and female) farmers (see Annex).

The report was prepared following guidelines provided by FAO.



Team taking part in the forest assessment in South Lebanon (2020)

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2. Country context

2.1. Agriculture and rural development context

Lebanon is a mountainous country, with mountains covering 73 percent of its total area (GIZ, 2014). Land forms, climate, soils and vegetation differ noticeably within short distances. A major feature of Lebanese topography is the alternation of lowland and highland into four longitudinal strips that run parallel with a north-to-south orientation. Lebanon's agricultural and food imports accounted for 16 percent of the total value of imports in 2019, while agricultural and food exports accounted for nearly 17 percent of the total exports value (Lebanese Customs, 2019). It is noteworthy that the value of agricultural exports represented 20 percent of the value of agricultural imports during 2019. Agriculture constitutes the main source of income for approximately 30-40 percent of the population in Lebanon and represents 3.6 percent of total employment (CAS, 2020). Agriculture is allocated a yearly budget not exceeding 1 percent of government spending.

According to the General Agricultural Census carried out in 2010 (MOA, 2012), the total utilized agricultural area (UAA) was 231 000 ha cultivated by 169 512 agricultural holders. This represented a quarter of the total agricultural land in Lebanon and nearly 30 percent of the country's total land area. Almost half of the agricultural holders relied solely on agricultural activities for their livelihoods and occupied around 63 percent of the UAA.

Almost 25 percent of the total UAA was located in Baalbeck-hermel, followed by the Bekaa (18 percent), Akkar (16 percent), Nabatieh and the South (11 percent each), the Mohafazas of the North (10 percent) and Mount-Lebanon (9 percent). The average size of agricultural holdings nationally was 1.3 ha. The largest holdings were mainly concentrated in the Bekaa region, averaging nearly 3 ha.

In terms of land concentration, 70 percent of all agricultural holders operated on less than 1 ha,

representing 10 percent of the total UAA, while less than 1 percent of all holders operated on more than 20 ha, representing 22 percent of total UAA.

The total area of agricultural land under irrigation in 2010 was 113 000 ha, representing almost half of the total UAA, with the highest share being in the Bekaa region (Baalbeck-Hermel and Bekaa) and the lowest share in Nabatieh (4 percent). Equal portions of the irrigated areas were under traditional (flooding) techniques and modern ones (sprinkler and drip). Updated figures from the production survey carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2016 (MOA, 2016) indicated that the area under irrigation had grown slightly to represent 54 percent of the total cropland.

The 2016 production survey also revealed that the country's total cropland area, including successive cropping for temporary crops, was 259 809 ha, of which 51 percent was dedicated to permanent crops, 49 percent for temporary crops and crops under greenhouses. In terms of crop diversity, in 2010, fruit trees represented 31 percent of the total cultivated land, followed by olive trees (23 percent), cereals (22 percent), vegetables crops (20 percent of total cropland), other temporary crops (4 percent), pome and stone fruits (14 percent of total cropland), citrus crops (4 percent), grapes (4 percent), other crops composed of nuts, tropical and other fruits (6 percent) and industrial crops (3 percent).

The total value of crop production in 2016 represented around 73 percent of the total agricultural value and 27 percent for animal production.

Livestock production is another important sector in rural areas. It represents one of the main agricultural activities (especially in the southern and northern regions of Lebanon that have the highest poverty rates in the country), with 60 percent of farmers depending on dairy products as primary means of subsistence. In 2010, the number of agricultural holders raising livestock was 15 800, representing 9 percent of the total agricultural holders. Nineteen

percent of these did not practice cultivation. The highest percentage of agricultural holders raising livestock was in the North region (Akkar and North Lebanon), at 46 percent, followed by the Bekaa region (Baalbeck-Hermel and Bekaa) at 31 percent. The lowest share was in the South, at 5 percent.

The 2010 agricultural census recorded a total of 6 568 cattle heads (43 percent in the Bekaa Region, followed by 16 percent in the North Region). Dairy cows represented 60 percent of total cattle heads. Updated figures from the 2016 production survey indicated that the number of cattle heads reached 86 265, of which 62 percent were dairy cows, accounting for 82 percent of the total value of milk production.

As for sheep, 265 345 heads were recorded in 2010 (72 percent in the Bekaa region, followed by 15 percent in the North Region), with milking ewes representing 58 percent of the total. In 2016, 428 985 heads of sheep were recorded, of which 55 percent were milking ewes.

The total number of goats in 2010 was 403 861 heads (51 percent in the Bekaa region, followed by 17 percent in Nabatieh and 16 percent in the North region). Milking goats represented 60 percent of the total. In 2016, there were 499 176 heads of goats, of which almost 50 percent were milking goats.

Forests cover 13.6 percent of the total land area of Lebanon (136 900 ha), while "other wooded lands" cover 11 percent. In total, 237 500 ha, that is, 23.4 percent of the Lebanese land area, consists of forests, woodlands and scrub. These areas are overwhelmed by tremendous pressures resulting from wars, forest fires, unsustainable practices, demographic expansion and urbanization.

2.2. Socio-economic characteristics of the country

2.2.1. Demography and administrative division

Lebanon is comprised of eight administrative governorates (*mohafazats*): Akkar, North Lebanon, Baalbek-Hermel, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon, Nabatieh and the capital of Beirut. Additionally, the country consists of 26 districts (*cazas*). The population is estimated at 4.8 million inhabitants. Of these, 79.8 percent are Lebanese citizens (CAS, 2020). Other inhabitants include approximately 470 000 Palestinians refugees, a moderate amount of Iraqi refugees, a significant number of registered Syrian refugees and some migrant workers (UNRWA, 2019). Since the beginning

of the refugee crisis in 2011, the overall number of displaced Syrians and living in Lebanon is estimated at about 1.5 million.

Data from 2018 show that 88 percent of the population is living in urban areas, mostly in Beirut. The growing urbanization rate is estimated at 0.7 percent. Males make up the majority of the rural–urban migrant population, at 76.3 percent, while females make up 23.7 percent. Female-headed households make up 18.5 percent of all households nationally, with higher rates of female-headed households in urban locales than rural ones (CAS, 2019).

The Lebanese population is young, with 44 percent below 24 years of age (Yaacoub and Badre, 2012). The male/female sex ratio at birth is 1.05 and for the working age population (15–64 years of age) is 0.95 (OECD Development Center, 2014). Lebanon has an age distribution profile that is somewhere between the regional average and that of more developed regions of the world, with proportionally fewer children and more elderly than in nearby countries (World Economic Forum, 2014).

2.2.2. Economic situation

Lebanon is considered by the World Bank to be an upper-middle income country, with a free-market economy that has extensive linkages with the developed world in most economic activities. The private sector plays a strong role in the Lebanese economy, including in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing, construction, trade and tourism, but especially in the services sector such as banking and finance, hotels and restaurants, and media and advertising. The private sector contributes over 80 percent to the GDP (Social Watch, 2017).

The Lebanese economy is being profoundly affected by the crisis in Syria. While output and employment growth were already slowing and worker productivity and per capita GDP already declining prior to the crisis, the disruption of trade routes and tourism, the influx of refugees and the greater political instability caused by the crisis have created additional economic burdens.

In 2018, the GDP of Lebanon was estimated by the World Bank to be USD 54.96 billion (World Bank, 2018). Agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 3 percent of GDP. Goods-producing sectors account for a small share of the Lebanese economy, making the country largely reliant on imports for consumption. The majority of its food needs (around 80 percent) are met through imports.

Since October 2019, Lebanon has been witnessing an unprecedented massive wave of nationwide protests sparked by an economic and monetary crisis that is hitting the population hard. The period leading up to the eruption of the protests saw a looming economic crisis, with an increase in government debt coupled with a decrease in GDP growth, as well as a rise in unemployment and poverty rates and soaring prices of essential commodities. The Lebanese Pound has been devalued by more than half against the US dollar.

The economy is further set to shrink sharply following the COVID-19 outbreak. The Government declared a lockdown in mid-March, with the Beirut airport shuttered, land and sea ports closed and people urged to stay at home, heaping more misery onto an economy already reeling from months of social unrest. Additionally, the lockdown has seen many banks close. This is further limiting access to dollars and exacerbating an already-acute dollar shortage, putting pressure on the parallel exchange rate and thus raising import costs.

As of August 2020, more than 55 percent of Lebanon's population was estimated to be living in poverty (UNESCWA, 2020). A World Bank study noted a strong link between agriculture and poverty in Lebanon, finding that, among major economic sectors, those working in agriculture experience the highest rate of poverty (Lampietti, Michaels and Mansour, 2010.).

2.2.3. Legal, religious and cultural context

Lebanon is a democratic country; the people of the Republic are the source of authority through their elected representatives. The Lebanese Constitution, promulgated in 1926, asserts the equality of rights and duties among all citizens and does not, in principle, carry any discrimination against women (Article 8). Lebanese society is composed of a mixture of religious communities and sects, with 18 officially recognized sects. The political system, a consensual democracy, maintains a power-sharing balance among the religious communities. However, sectarian tensions have been the main triggers of internal conflicts.

Even following the civil war that lasted from 1975–1990, the country has remained in a state of political instability, security risks, economic pressures, and social and humanitarian challenges. Under such delicate conditions, the Government is facing multiple challenges, including with regard to gender issues.

The State is often critiqued as being weak in the areas of civil affairs and personal status, especially with regard to women's civic rights, family matters

and gender relations, because of the dominance of personal status laws (Social Impact, Inc., 2012). This is reflected in the Constitution (Articles 9 and 10), which guarantees Lebanese families the right to exercise spiritual independence and to manage familial affairs based on their own religious beliefs and requirements. For instance, personal status laws govern matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance and vary by religious community. These personal status codes are known to contain discriminatory measures against women. Citizen movements are therefore putting pressure on lawmakers to introduce a unified civil status law.

Legal age of marriage varies across the different personal status codes, but all religious groups allow girls under the age of 18 to marry. In fact, CAS figures indicate that 2.1 percent of marriages involve girls below the age of 15 and 13 percent involve those below the age of 18 (CAS and UNICEF, 2010). Rates are higher among Syrian refugees, for whom 11 percent of marriages involve those under the age of 15, including girls as young as 10 years old and boys as 13 years old (UNFPA, 2014).

According to the Lebanese Constitution (Article 7), women (both married and unmarried) have the same rights as men to enter into contracts and own and administer property, including land and non-land assets. In practice, however, husbands and male family members often heavily influence women with regard to the administration of property, income and other financial assets. Moreover, a predominant belief is that family property including land should be kept within the same family and thus should be registered under a male's name, even if it contradicts inheritance calculations or assigned shares sanctioned under a given religion.

Lebanese women married to foreign spouses cannot pass their nationality to their children or spouse. In response to social pressure, the Minister of the Interior issued Decree 4186 in 2010 to accord foreign husbands and children of Lebanese women courtesy residency rights.

Lebanon's Parliament passed the Law on Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence (Law number 293) in April 2014, which established important protection measures and related policing and court reforms. However, this legislation adopts a narrow definition of domestic violence, excluding some forms of abuse. Furthermore, personal status laws, even if contrary to the provisions of the new law, still apply.

There are no legal restrictions on freedom of movement and access to public space for Lebanese women. By the Constitution or by laws, women are legally entitled to open a bank account, access bank loans and enter into financial contracts. Nevertheless, such actions are largely governed by socio-cultural norms, limiting them in practice.

2.2.4. Gender indicators

According to the 2019 Human Development Report (UNDP, 2019), Lebanon’s Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2018 was 0.730. This places the country in the high human development category, positioning it at 93 out of 189 countries and territories. Lebanon’s gross national income (GNI) per capita increased by about 63.9 percent between 1980 and 2018.

With regard to gender inequality, according to UNDP, Lebanon has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.362, ranking it 79 out of 162 countries. In 2018, women held 4.7 percent of parliamentary seats and 54.3 percent of adult women had reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 55.6 percent of their male counterparts.

The World Economic Forum recently released the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 (World Economic Forum, 2020), which examines the gaps between men and women in four essential categories: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Out of 153 countries, Lebanon ranked 145th on the Gender Gap Index, with a score of 0.599. In the economic participation and opportunity category, Lebanon ranked 139, with a score of 0.442. Contributing to this is a female

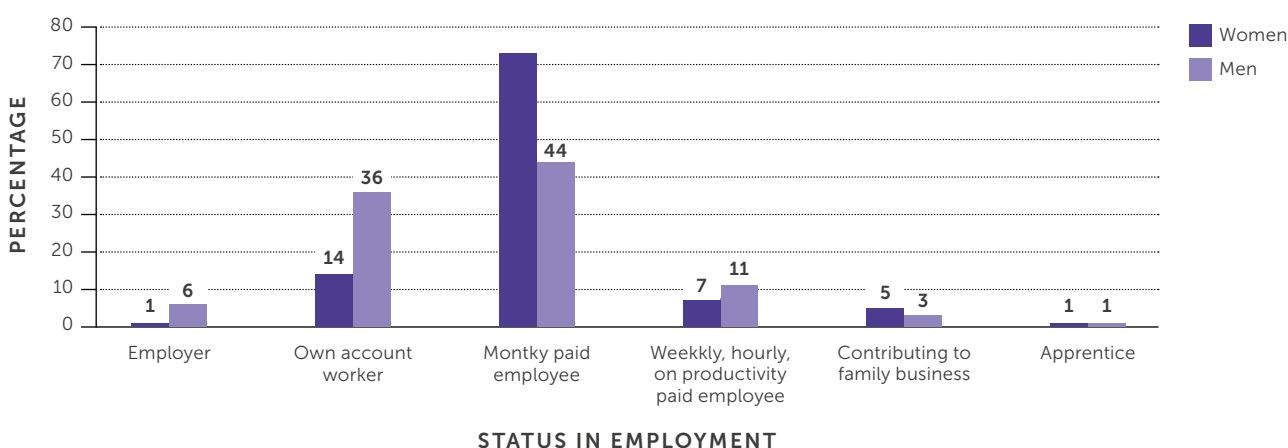
labour force participation rate of 26 percent and a female-to-male ratio of 0.09 among legislators, senior officials and managers (with only 8.4 percent of such positions held by women). Lebanon occupied the 111th position in the educational attainment category, with a score of 0.964, the literacy rate being of 94 percent and ranking Lebanon at the 94th place and the enrolment rate in primary school at the 133rd place. However, on enrolment in secondary and tertiary education, Lebanon ranked 1st, with a score of 1.000 (with a female/male ratio of 1.05). Finally, Lebanon scored second-to-last on political empowerment, with a score of 0.024. In response to that, we noted 6 out of 20 ministers in the cabinet were women in January 2020, showing real political will on gender advancement.

A recent OECD report (OECD Development Center, 2019) included Lebanon among high-ranking countries in its Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), indicating relatively high levels of inequality. In 2019, Lebanon’s SIGI value was 56 percent. According to the report, Lebanon’s SIGI value is a reflection of the discrimination embedded in its customary laws, social norms and practices as well as inadequate legal protections against gender discrimination.

2.2.5. Employment

According to CAS (2020), there is a gender pay gap of 6.5 percent for Lebanese employees, meaning that men earn on average 6.5 percent more than their female counterparts for the same job. For non-Lebanese employees, this gap is about 11.6 percent. Furthermore, only 30 percent of women are recorded as economically active, with women’s activity reaching its peak before the age of 35, while men remain active even after official retirement age.

Figure 1: Status in employment for men and women



Source: CAS, 2011. Labor Market Study.

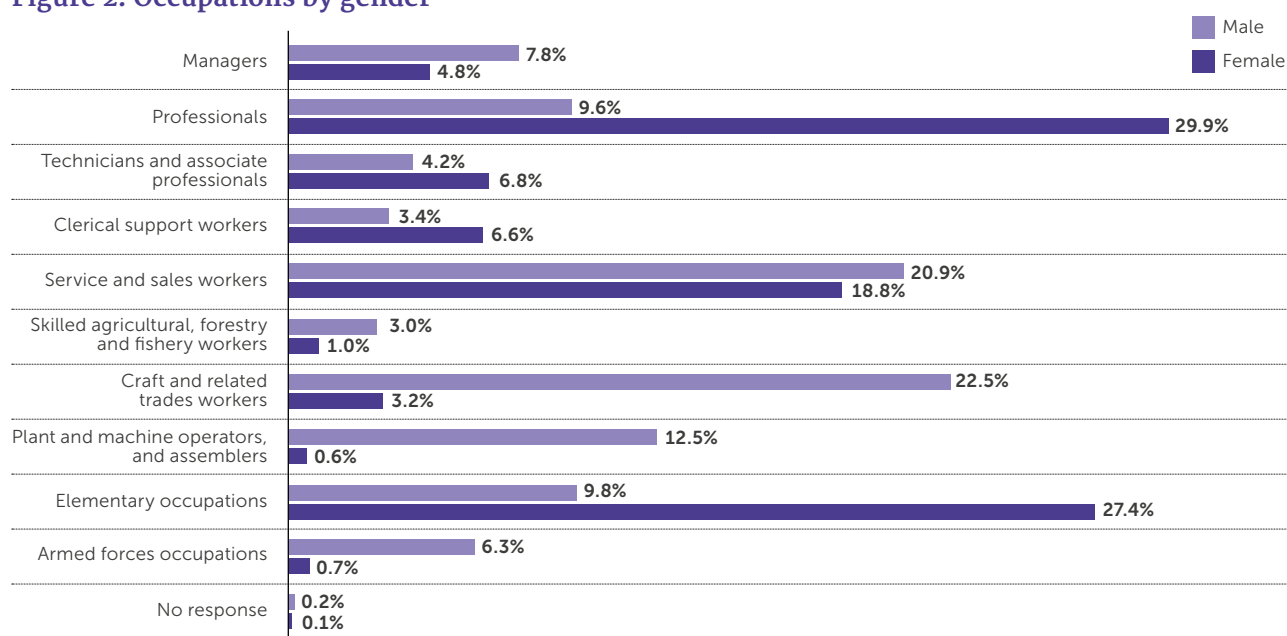
The activity rate for men aged 25–60 is very high, at over 90 percent, whereas it is at its highest for women aged 25–29, at 53 percent. The same study revealed that among the older working population (65 years and above), both women and men are mainly occupied with agricultural jobs, work as specialists (such as lawyers, teachers, doctors and engineers) or work as general and corporate managers.

The CAS study also found that although there were proportionately fewer women than men in employment in Lebanon, almost 30 percent of working women were occupied in professional positions (such as doctors, teachers and engineers) compared with only 10 percent of working men. In the category of skilled agricultural labour, men

are slightly more present (3 percent) than women (1 percent), and this is the category where the gender pay gap is the largest (21 percent).

The general unemployment rate for Lebanon in 2018–2019 was 11.4 percent, a rate which is drastically higher, at about 23 percent, among young people, particularly women. Considering all ages, the unemployment rate is higher for women than men regardless of education level (14 percent compared to 10 percent). This is a reflection of limited job opportunities along with women's constraints in accessing acceptable working conditions. While there are no laws mandating non-discrimination based on gender in hiring, the Labour Code was amended in 2000 to ensure equal pay for women.

Figure 2: Occupations by gender



Source: CAS, 2020.

Table 1: Average salary for women and men by economic sector (thousand LBP)

	Women	Men	Lebanon	Gender pay gap %
Agriculture	[233]	295	288	21.0
Manufacturing	455	596	569	23.8
Trade	531	595	578	10.8
Transport, post & telecom	[664]	1070	965	38.0
Services, financial intermediation & insurance	736	785	768	6.2
All sectors *	660	702	690	6.0

[] Too small for reliable estimate

USD1= 1 507.5 LBP (source: Banque de Liban)

Minimum Salary in 2007 - 300 000 LBP

* except construction

Source: CAS, 2011. Labor Market Study.

Regarding employment in the judiciary system, Lebanon recently achieved its highest number of women employed in this field. As of 2018, females held 49.3 percent of judicial positions (334 female judges compared to 343 male judges). However, the proportion of women decreases as seniority increases, as there were more women serving in courts of first instances (71 percent of female judges) than in higher courts (47.8 percent at the level of Appeal and 40.2 percent in Cassation) (ESCWA, 2019).

However, these figures on employment status will undoubtedly be impacted by the economic crisis, protest and COVID-19, affecting women's employment rates and income generation. As women are encouraged to take leave from the paid workforce to take on greater unpaid care work within the home, their jobs are likely to be disproportionately affected by cuts and lay-offs, leading to an increased inability for women to support themselves and their families (UN Women Lebanon, 2020). According to a study recently conducted by the World Food Programme (2020), the COVID-19 outbreak and related containment measures have pushed nearly one out of every three Lebanese into unemployment thus far, while one in five respondents saw their salary reduced. Lebanese respondents living in Akkar reported some of the highest rates of job loss and reduced income due to COVID-19. Reduced salaries have particularly affected Lebanese women and young adults between 25–34 years of age. Drastic change in employment status has been felt significantly more by Syrian women than men, as 61 percent of women reported losing their jobs due to COVID-19 compared to 46 percent of men. Similar proportions of women and men have experienced salary reduction or have been impacted by public unrest and riots.

While women dominate the ranks of frontline health care responders in Lebanon, they remain under-represented in national decision-making bodies overseeing the COVID response. Despite efforts to maintain high quality of care, access to sexual and reproductive health, including maternal health and contraception, has suffered. Mental health concerns amongst women, especially female migrant domestic workers, are particularly high during the COVID-19 outbreak, accompanying dire economic conditions (UN Women *et al.* 2020).

2.2.6. Health and education

Gender indices scores for Lebanon on health and education are high as compared to other countries in the region. Female genital mutilation is not

commonly practiced in Lebanon (Chamal Khalaf, 2010). According to the United Nations Population Fund, infant mortality rates are higher for boys than for girls. In 2009, the rate of use of contraceptives among Lebanese women averaged 55 percent, the highest rate being in Beirut (62.4 percent) and the lowest in Nabatieh (32.6 percent) (UNFPA, 2014).

In the 2013–2014 Lebanon Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report, it was noted that the most important achievements in terms of strides toward gender equality were in the field of education (UNDP, 2014). Net primary school enrolment rate for girls is not too far behind the rate for boys (87 and 96 percent, respectively) while at secondary level, more girls than boys are enrolled (58 and 51 percent, respectively) among the general population (Lebanese and non-Lebanese people). Similar trends are seen at the regions level, most notably in Akkar-Minieh, where girls have a 25 percent higher rate of secondary school enrolment than boys (CAS, 2009). Despite high female literacy rates and net school enrolment ratios, however, Lebanese women's economic participation is low.

2.3. Policy, legislative and institutional context for gender equality

2.3.1. Relevant political commitment: International treaties and gender

Lebanon has ratified several international treaties concerned with human rights and women's issues. An important intergovernmental agreement is the Declaration and Platform for Action for improving the status of women approved at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

In 1995, the State of Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 1953, and in 1991, Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) without reservations. Lebanon also ratified the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in 2004 and, in 2002, signed but did not ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Lebanon did not make any reservations to the optional protocols.

Lebanon ratified CEDAW in 1997 with reservations to Article 9(2) (related to granting women the same rights as men regarding passing on one's nationality to one's children); several subparagraphs of Article 16(1) (paragraphs c, d, e and f, related to personal status laws); and Article 29(1) on the settlement of disputes. Lebanon has published CEDAW in the

official Gazette, giving it primacy over national laws, making it one of the few Arab countries to do so. However, the country still has not ratified CEDAW's Optional Protocol and maintains reservation to the abovementioned clauses.

Other related treaties ratified by Lebanon with their respective dates of ratification are the following:

- » Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), 1956;
- » International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), 1972;
- » International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), 1972;
- » Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1990) and two of its Optional Protocols impacting the rights of girls, as well as the amendment to article 43(2) of the CRC (1995), 2000;
 - » Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000), 2002
 - » Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000), 2004;
- » Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) (1987; ratified 2000) and its Optional Protocol (2008) addressing issues of harassment and gender violence;
- » Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), including its Optional Protocol addressing forms of abuse to which women and children (who can be particularly vulnerable to trafficking of persons and related smuggling of migrants), 2005; and
- » Security Council Resolutions 1325 in 2000 (the core "Women Peace and Security" Resolution) and 1889 in 2009 (which focuses on ensuring women's participation on building peace).⁶

2.3.2. National policies and gender

A national ten-year strategy for women (2011–2021) was developed by the National Commission

for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for which a series of national action plans were developed (the first for 2013–2016 and the second for 2017–2019). The strategy was elaborated based on a participatory process involving NGOs, professional associations and relevant ministries concerned with the improvement of the status of women and the advancement of human rights in general in Lebanon. As a public document intended to foster good governance, the ten-year strategy include the following twelve strategic objectives:

- » Achieving citizenship to its full potential on the basis of equality between men and women, both de facto (in practice) and de jure (in legal texts);
- » Promoting opportunities for girls and women in the areas of education and training;
- » Achieving full equality between men and women in health care through the provision of health services and care for girls and women, including reproductive health care;
- » Combating poverty among women and in general;
- » Promoting the participation of women in the economic sectors;
- » Achieving equality between men and women in all fields and sectors and in decision-making positions;
- » Combating all forms of violence affecting girls and women in all areas;
- » Eradicating the stereotyping of women in local culture and in media forms such as radio, television and advertising;
- » Enhancing the contribution of women to environmental protection;
- » Strengthening the capacity of institutions concerned with women's issues at the national level and reinforcing partnerships between NCLW and public-sector departments and institutions, as well as with civil society;
- » Protecting girls and women in situations of emergencies, armed conflict, war and natural disaster; and
- » Introducing gender mainstreaming in all fields.

⁶ These are relevant due to the Lebanese situation often being unstable and insecure and the need to strengthen women's participation. In fact, one of the demining teams engaged in the cleaning of agricultural areas affected by the 2006 war was entirely composed of women from civil society groups (European Union, 2015).

Although CEDAW has a specific article (article 14) on rural women, neither the NCLW strategy nor its action plans included any objective, clause or intervention specifically addressing the situation or needs of rural women in general or women in agriculture in particular.

The Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA) developed in 2016 its **National Strategy for Gender Equality (NGS) 2018–2022**, comprised of the following 12 areas of action: poverty; legal reforms; power and decision making; education; economy, employment and entrepreneurship; gender-based violence; health; media and culture; environment; peace and security; natural crisis and disasters; and institutional mechanisms. OMSWA is the national entity responsible for facilitating and coordinating the implementation of the Strategy and its actions.

In 2011, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) developed a **National Social Development Strategy (NSDS)**. The main objectives of the NSDS were to: (1) achieve better health; (2) strengthen social protection mechanisms; (3) provide quality education; (4) improve opportunities for equitable and safe employment; and (5) revitalize communities and develop social capital. The NSDS document included a section on gender mainstreaming by explaining the role of the Women's Affairs Division at the Ministry of Social Affairs' Department of Family Affairs. However, the NSDS did not address rural women in particular. In 2012, the MOSA, together with the help of the Collective for Research and Training on Development–Action (CTRDA), undertook a gender audit exercise. Key findings of the audit showed no explicit mention of what MOSA's mandate is in relation to realizing gender equality and how this mandate relates to fundamental texts such as CEDAW. MOSA further elaborated a **5-year Gender Mainstreaming Strategy**. Its goal was to strengthen gender equality both in the programmes and services that MOSA is mandated to deliver and to institutionalize gender equality within MOSA itself.

In 2015, MOA developed a **5-Year Agricultural Strategy (2015–2019)**.⁷ The strategy's specific objectives were three-fold: (1) to provide safe and quality food; (2) to improve the contribution of agriculture to the economic and social development

of the country; and (3) to promote the sustainable management of natural and genetic resources.

The strategy encompassed the following eight courses of action: (1) improve food safety and quality of locally produced and imported products; (2) increase productivity and competitiveness of Lebanese agricultural products; (3) improve the good governance and sustainable use of natural resources; (4) strengthen agricultural extension and education; (5) strengthen agricultural research and laboratories; (6) develop the cooperative sector and mutual funds; (7) develop the capacities of MOA; and (8) responding to climate change impacts.

However, the strategy only suggested economic empowerment of women under its second course of action (improve food safety and quality of locally produced and imported products). In this area, women and youth were to be targeted through specific programmes in order for them to engage in agriculture-related investments, including increasing their access to soft loans and guaranteeing funds in collaboration with Kafalat⁸ and in the preparation and dissemination of feasibility studies for a number of agricultural projects, but with little indication of the way forward. The strategy was neither gender-sensitive nor gender-responsive, but FAO is currently assisting the Ministry of Agriculture in reviewing the ongoing strategy and preparing a strategy and an action plan for 2021–2025, as well as assisting in the identification of SDG targets and indicators to report on by the MOA. Thus, efforts are being deployed to have gender mainstreamed in the strategy, including women's empowerment.

On the other hand, MOA elaborated the **National Forest Programme (NFP)**,⁹ a ten-year plan (2015–2025) that recognizes the valuable role of women in forest management. The NFP lays out the Government's interventions in the forest sector with the aim of achieving sustainable management of Lebanese forest resources, while defining the

⁷ This strategy was developed under the framework of an agricultural and rural development project funded by the European Union and implemented by MOA.

⁸ Kafalat is a Lebanese financial company with a public concern that assists small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in accessing commercial bank funding. Kafalathelps SMEs by providing loan guarantees based on business plans and feasibility studies. It processes guarantee applications for loans that are to be provided by Lebanese banks to SMEs operating throughout Lebanon under the Kafalat program. Kafalat targets SMEs and innovative startups across a variety of economic sectors (industry, agriculture, tourism, traditional crafts and high technology). Interest rate subsidies are financed by the Lebanese treasury and administered by the Central Bank of Lebanon.

⁹ The NFP was elaborated in 2014 in the context of the regional project *Silva Mediterranea – Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests* funded by GIZ through the project entitled *Adapting Forest Policy to Climate Change in the MENA Region*.

coordination and cooperation mechanisms among all public and private actors. The NFP's programme of actions revolves around forest governance, forest ecosystems functioning and forest ecosystems services, with six operational objectives and associated activities. Included under its ecosystem services goal is support of the socio-economic development of low-income villagers and communities, while empowering women for a more balanced gender approach in all sectors of forestry. Also included are related activities around assessing and reviving traditional practices related directly or indirectly to forests in villages with women's leadership.

2.3.3. National gender machinery

At the Parliament level, there exist 16 inter-parliamentary committees comprised of parliament members. One is the **Parliamentary Commission for the Woman and the Child**, which is actively involved with the civil society movement against gender inequalities in Lebanon. In 2013 it produced a study on the third MDG (focused on gender equality) with the support of UNDP. Another Commission on Human Rights also deals with women's affairs from a human rights perspective.

In response to Lebanon's commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and CEDAW, an official body, the **National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW)**, was established at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers under Law no. 720/1998. The NCLW has advisory, coordinating and executive duties. Its objectives include achieving women's empowerment and ensuring gender equality through the preparation and implementation of gender equality strategies and policies. The Commission also fosters networking and cooperation around gender mainstreaming among Lebanese nongovernmental institutions and public institutions while ensuring respect of gender-related international conventions. The General Assembly of the NCLW, headed in principle by the First Lady of the Lebanese Republic and currently headed by the daughter of the President of the Republic, is comprised of 24 members appointed by the Council of Ministers. Women members of the Parliament and ministers are considered ex-officio members of the NCLW and have a consultative status during their terms.

An interesting approach by the NCLW was the assigning of **gender focal points** to different ministries and public institutions. The NCLW launched a special programme to train these focal points, which currently number more than 45 throughout

the entire territory. With these focal points, a special network for raising awareness of gender issues and incorporating a gender approach into the policies of their respective ministries and public institutions has been established. Additionally, gender auditing was implemented in two ministries (Ministry of Education and Higher Education and Ministry of Social Affairs) as part of gender mainstreaming interventions at the public administrative level.

However, this Commission was not given any executive power and is lacking human and financial resources to effectively promote the implementation of CEDAW, including article 14 of CEDAW concerning rural women, and to advocate for the integration of gender perspectives in all levels of government. Nevertheless, the NCLW has assumed a very positive role, together with civil society, in advocating for and changing laws addressing gender inequalities (AESA-Femconsult Consortium, 2017).

A **Women's Affairs Division at the Ministry of Social Affairs' Department of Family Affairs** was established in 1994 (Decree no. 5734) to formulate and institute programmes that respond to the needs of women and improve and strengthen their capacities. It is also responsible for proposing budgets with funds earmarked to implement such programmes in coordination with other line ministries.

The **OMSWA (Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs)**, created in December 2016, is responsible for coordinating actions across governmental and nongovernmental institutions, including international and national organisations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure the implementation of the National Gender Strategy by adopting action plans based on strategic priorities. OMSWA is responsible for implementing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality and for ensuring gender mainstreaming in the implementation of SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals). The creation of the Ministry for Women Affairs demonstrates efforts to institutionalise the promotion of gender equality at the highest level in Lebanon, but gaps and inequalities persist.

The cabinet formed in January 2020 does not include any minister in charge of women affairs.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education issued a **ministerial decision to set up a committee on gender perspectives** with the aim of gender mainstreaming the Ministry's public policies (Decision no. 810/M/2013).

The Government has created some highly flexible bodies within or across ministries that function similarly to NGOs, but which also enjoy governmental funding and support. An example of such bodies is the **Economic and Social Fund for Development (ESFD)** created within the Council of Development and Reconstruction to support the poor through microfinance to mitigate the economic changes resulting from Lebanon's integration in the World Trade Organization.

At MOA, the programme to establish the **National Observatory for Women in Agriculture and Rural Areas (NOWARA)**, the unit in charge of gender policies, was initiated in 2007 in the framework of a Project financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Directorate General for Development Cooperation and implemented by CIHEAM-IAM Bari (Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes – Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen) in collaboration with MOA.

NOWARA's main objectives were: (1) promotion of territorial development through valorisation of women entrepreneurship; (2) creation of innovative dynamics related to work and employment of women in the agricultural, agro-food and rural sectors; (3) provision of support to women by spreading knowledge and good practices; (4) the furthering of national recognition of the role of women in the economy, both in the formal and informal sectors; (5) promotion of women's participation in rural policies and decision making; and (6) the enhancement of partnerships and networking. NOWARA functioned during the period of 2007–2014, benefiting from the support of many international and national organizations. NOWARA established and implemented many activities addressing the different needs of rural women in various areas such as economic empowerment, capacity building, entrepreneurial skills, and awareness raising on the roles and contributions of women and girls to agricultural and rural development. Additionally, among NOWARA's achievements are three (unpublished) studies, one of them a situational analysis of rural women and their characteristics, roles and aspirations in Lebanese rural communities in 2010–2011 (Abul Khoudoud and Dika Hamze, 2011).

Another study¹⁰ conducted in 2013 was a socio-economic analysis of female agricultural workers and labourers in South Lebanon. NOWARA also published a series of three didactic books through an educational and awareness-raising programme with the UNESCO Lebanese National Commission targeting youth and teachers in public and private schools across all regions of Lebanon. The books *Stories from my village* and *Women's stories from my country* feature real stories and cases expressed through the students' own writings and drawings on deep-rooted gender inequalities and discriminatory practices while highlighting women's and girls' experiences and achievements through use of role play and marionettes in both rural and urban contexts.

The institutional status of NOWARA is being reviewed for possible legalization through the support of a Canadian-funded project implemented by FAO in cooperation with MOA to support women's cooperatives and associations in the agri-food sector of Lebanon. Indeed, since 2014, no proper NOWARA activity has been done. Yet, the website of NOWARA is still being updated and a small network of women who used to compose NOWARA has been established.

Another recent initiative is a regional project on **"Enhancing gender mainstreaming in sustainable rural development and food security"(GeMaiSa)**, funded through Italian cooperation and implemented by CIHEAM Bari. This project involved gender mainstreaming actions for gender equality and rural women's empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa region through promotion of partnerships around natural resources management and food security. The first phase of this project took place in 2015–2016 in Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon. Given its positive outcomes, **GeMaiSa 2** (2018–2020) was developed, adding three new countries from the region (Jordan, Morocco, Palestine) to strengthen and scale up the previous achievements. Through this project, real improvements to rural women's conditions have been noted, including through vocational training, delivery of equipment, trainings to promote awareness of women's rights, dissemination of information on available local resources, creation of local networks and implementation of economic activities. MOA is the Lebanese institutional partner in charge of the implementation of this project.

¹⁰ Led by W. Dikah Hamze (co-author and study leader), the study was entitled *Women agricultural entrepreneurs, workers, and laborers in South of Lebanon, 2012–2013* (unpublished). This socioeconomic study was conducted in collaboration with the University of Milan through and Italian-funded cooperation project.

2.3.4. Civil society and international community efforts to advance gender equality

Lebanon has a unique arrangement of civil society actors that are diverse, dynamic and complex. These actors often play a critical role in filling gaps that public institutions have been unable to fill, including in the areas of health, education, social welfare, shelters for victims of domestic violence, legal advice for accessing the justice system and the environment. Some work on gender issues, human rights, women's rights and advocacy, women's economic participation and women's empowerment, including political empowerment. Others are specialized in violence against women. Some advocate for citizens' rights and mobilize actions in favour of legislative change where there are discrepancies between human rights and legislation. Some exert substantial lobbying power in the face of government resistance to change, e.g. for better services.

Lebanon's civil society has an impressive level of coordination and joint efforts, especially in advocacy issues. Coalitions are regularly formed to take on issues of common interest like nationality law, domestic violence and personal status law. Some have established branches or facilities outside Beirut, including in many rural areas, to extend their outreach. There are also a number of women's associations that are active on specific issues. These and other forms of organization have led to many

recent amendments to laws that had been fostering gender inequalities, as described throughout this report. Moreover, there are quite a few international NGOs in Lebanon. These can be locally based after registering at the Ministry of Interior as non-profit organizations. While it would be nearly impossible to name all civil society groups playing a crucial role in gender equality and women's empowerment in Lebanon, there are two interactive national directories of NGOs available, including an online directory run by UNDP and the Daleel Madani Directory, created by the NGO Lebanon Support.

Lebanon Support is an independent, nongovernmental, non-religious, non-political and non-profit information and research centre. It established a portal for NGOs working in Lebanon and developed a directory of these NGOs. It also developed an online collaborative platform called The Gender Collaborative Information & Research Network. This network is part of Lebanon Support's broader Civil Society Knowledge Centre (CSKC), bringing together civil society organizations, researchers, practitioners and experts to enhance local and national capacities, improve access to knowledge and its development, and provide evidence-based research, information, and literature on gender issues and concerns. CSKC has an online mapping of NGOs working in the areas of gender equity information and research, grouped area of focus, sector of intervention, and type of organization.



Members of a cooperative from South Lebanon part of the FAO project "Support to Women's Cooperatives and Associations in the Agri-food Sector in Lebanon" known as the "Raidat El Rif", funded by Canada and implemented in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. The project aims to support women's cooperatives and associations by promoting a social and cultural environment that enables women's economic empowerment while also increasing the opportunity for these cooperatives and associations to participate in local economies to establish or expand agri-food income-generating enterprises.

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3. Gender analysis of the agriculture and rural sector

3.1. Gender and agricultural holdings characteristics

In 2010, there existed around 169 512 agricultural holders in Lebanon (FAO and MOA, 2012). Almost 68 percent of them had an average landholding size of less than 1 ha. Thirty-three percent of the holders were in the North and Akkar *mohafazats* of Lebanon jointly, followed by 20 percent residing in Bekaa and Baalbeck-Hermel Mohafazat.

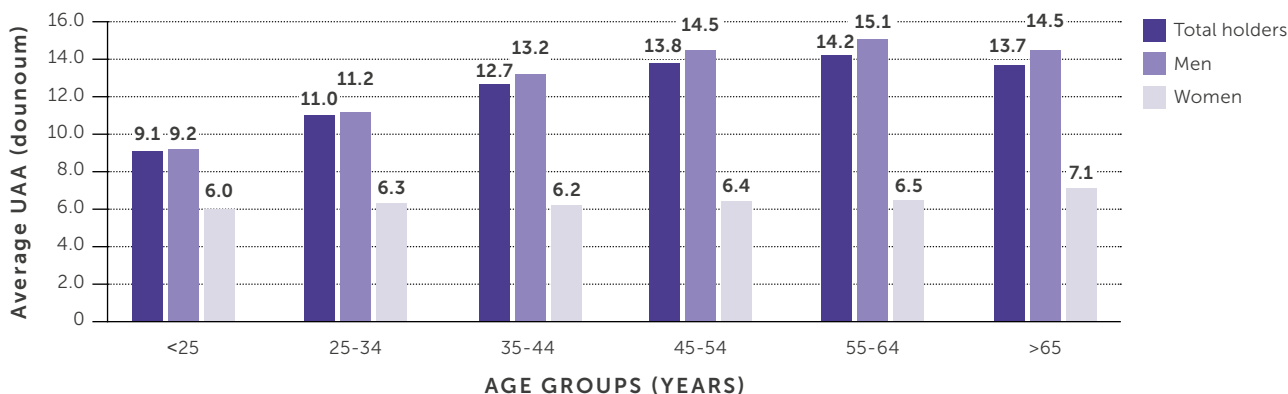
The total number of women agricultural holders was 14 565, representing 9 percent of total holders and cultivating around 4 percent of total UAA. The average holding size for women was around 0.7 ha. Analysis of the distribution of women agricultural holders per *mohafazat* revealed that one-third were operating in the North (Akkar and North of Lebanon),

23 percent in Nabatiyeh, 19 percent in the South 13 percent in Bekaa (Baalbeck-Hermel and Bekaa) and 12 percent in Mount Lebanon.

Additionally, the agricultural census revealed that the average agricultural holder's age was 52-years-old, while for women holders the average was 55-years-old. Almost 30 percent of the women agricultural holders were above 65 years of age, compared to 23 percent for men.

Youth agricultural holders (below 35 years of age) represented only 11 percent of total holders (and only 7 percent in the case of women), of which 40 percent were located in the North. It is noteworthy that women holders above 45 years old are cultivating around 78 percent of the total UAA operated by all women holders.

Figure 3: Average cultivated land size (UAA) by sex and age of the agricultural holder



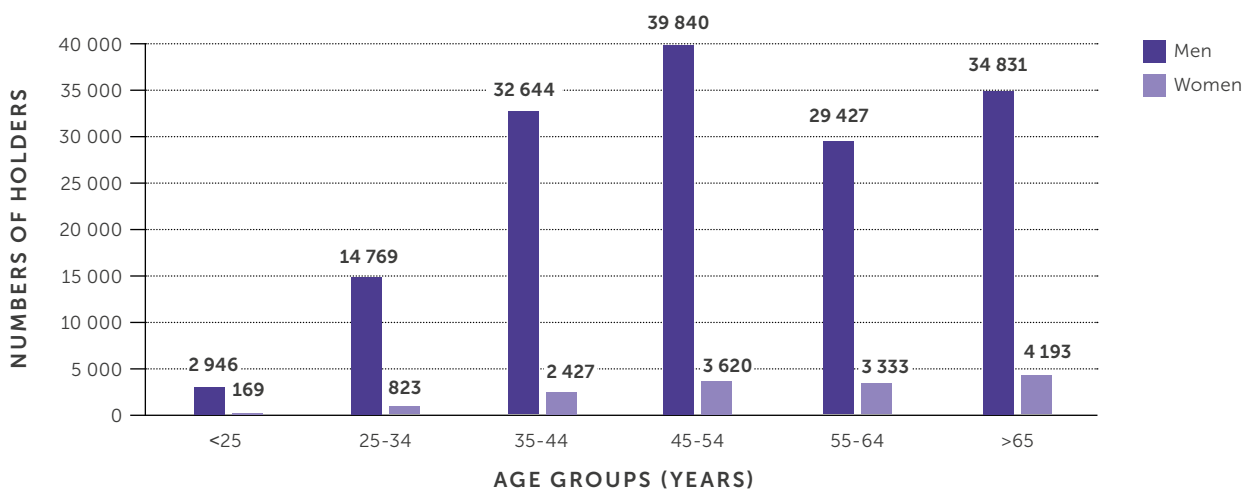
Source: FAO and MOA, 2012.

The highest number of male holders was in the 45–54 years age group (around 26 percent) whereas the highest number of female holders (29 percent) is in the >65 years age group (Figure 4).

Additionally, women rearing livestock represent around 10 percent of total women agricultural holders, holding 5 percent of cattle heads and 2 percent of both sheep and goat herds. As for the

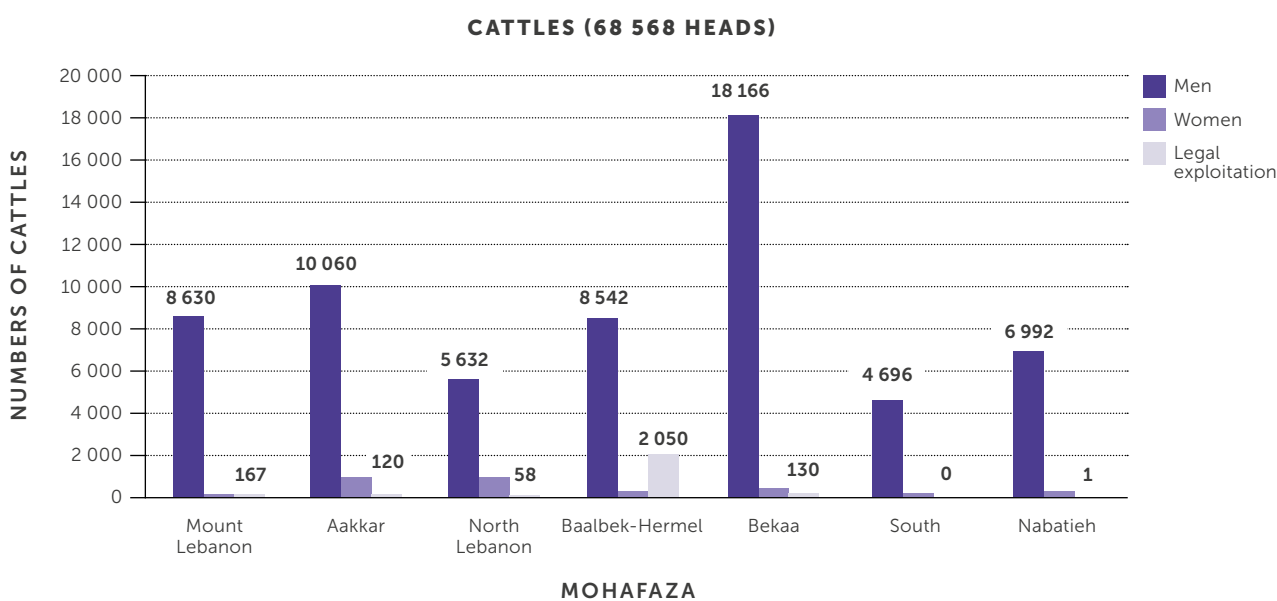
fisheries sector, approximately 6 500 fishers were working in 44 fishing ports/landing sites along the coastline and there were approximately 2 662 small fishing boats in use averaging 7 meters in length (Majdalani, 2004). According to national law, and also for safety reasons, fishing activity is restricted to 6 nautical miles from the coast. No women have been found to work as fishers according to different fisheries censuses and surveys.

Figure 4: Distribution of total number of agricultural holders by age and sex

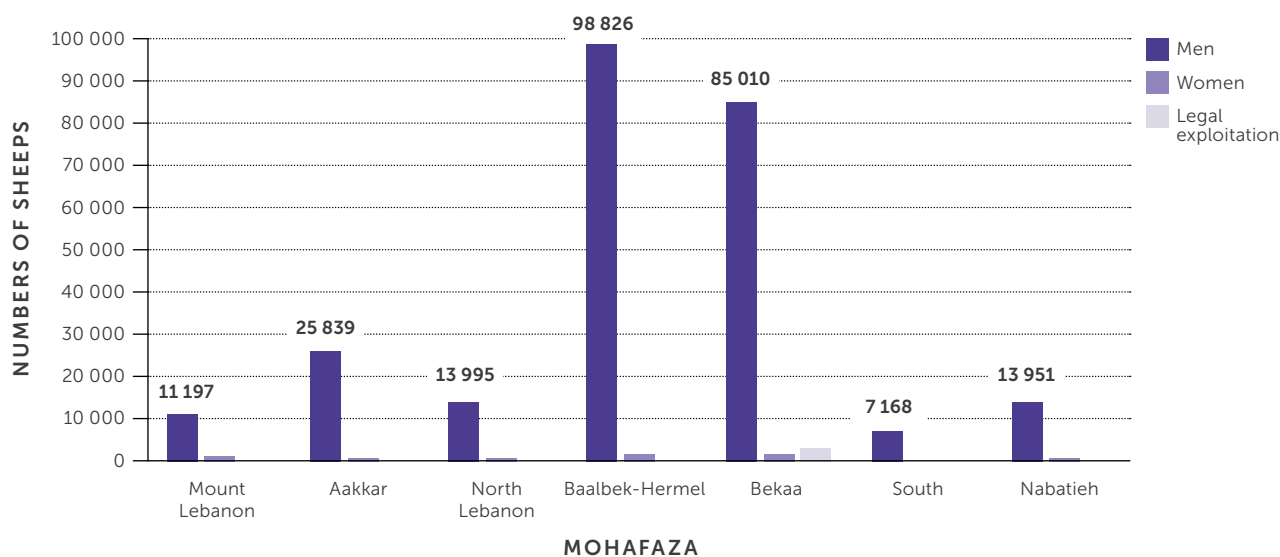


Source: FAO and MOA, 2012.

Figure 5: Distribution of cattle (heads) by sex and mohafazat



Source: FAO and MOA, 2012.

Figure 6: Distribution of sheep (heads) by sex and mohafazat

Source: FAO and MOA, 2012.

3.2. Gender and representation in rural organizations

The cooperative movement is very present in the rural areas of Lebanon. Officially, there exist a total of 1 350 cooperatives, including 1 086 agricultural cooperatives.¹¹ Additionally there are around 12 federated agricultural cooperatives in Lebanon. The official numbers, however, often do not correspond

to actual numbers on the ground. It is to be noted that the General Directorate of Cooperatives is currently assessing registered cooperatives and dismantling the ones that are not active or not compliant with the legislation. On this matter, FAO is supporting the establishment of a data management system (incorporating sex-disaggregated data), with the end goal of creating an updated and unified database of Lebanese cooperatives.¹²

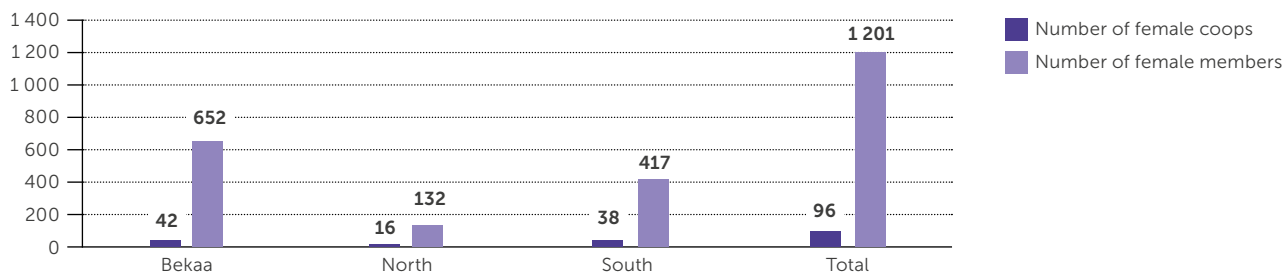
Table 2: Distribution of cooperatives by sector and geographical presence

	Bekaa	Beirut	Mount Lebanon	Nabatieh	South Lebanon	North Lebanon	Total
Total	275	23	172	177	119	320	1 086
Agriculture	132	2	81	117	79	123	534
Beekeeping	10	0	16	7	4	18	55
Fisheries	3	2	18	0	7	13	43
Animal Production	31	0	7	2	4	15	59
Food transformation	55	1	11	22	8	57	154
Marketing	12	0	5	2	3	0	22
Artisan	18	0	3	7	4	10	42
Microcredit	6	15	15	3	3	3	36
Others	18	16	16	17	7	81	141

Source: FAO. 2020. Profiling agriculture cooperatives, Lebanon, TCP/RAB/3603

¹¹ According to the General Directorate of Cooperatives registry, there 1 350 cooperatives exist in Lebanon. These include agricultural (animals and produce) fisheries, crafting, housing and consumer cooperatives, among others). For purposes of this report, only 1 086 agricultural cooperatives were considered, excluding consumer, housing and other non-agricultural cooperatives.

¹² Project GCP/LEB/030/CAN.

Figure 7: Distribution of rural women’s cooperatives, by region and female membership

Source: Author’s own, using data are from the General Directorate of Cooperatives, MOA.

In geographic terms, a relative concentration of cooperatives is to be noted in the South and Nabatieh *mohafazats*, representing almost 31 percent of the total cooperatives (Table 2). This is probably due to the numerous emergency activities developed in these areas after the wars, together with the large presence of NGOs in the same areas, often requiring their beneficiaries to establish a formal association before becoming eligible for assistance or for easier outreach.

Cooperatives in Lebanon are male-dominated; women’s cooperatives make up 10 percent of total cooperatives and 19 percent of agricultural cooperatives (ILO, 2018). According to General Directorate of Cooperatives, the majority of women’s cooperatives are women-led agro-food cooperatives (livestock, produce, beekeeping, fisheries, crafts and other artisanal goods). That is, rural women mostly organize themselves and assume leadership positions in agro-processing and marketing and rural artisanal produce organizations. These cooperatives number around 96, with total of 1 201 female members. The highest number are in Bekaa followed by Nabatieh and South region and then North of Lebanon. Members of these cooperatives come together for processing and marketing of agro-food products including plant products (e.g. jams, pickles, olive oil, grape molasses, concentrated juice and distillates, water of roses, etc.) aromatic and medicinal plants and herbs (e.g. thyme), dairy produce (e.g. labneh, yogurt, kishik, Sshanklish, cheese), wheat by products (e.g. bourghol and frikei) and others.

To date, rural women (as with men) count on national and international NGOs for support in forming cooperatives. An example is support from UNDP after the July 2006 war severely damaged Lebanon’s socio-economic conditions and infrastructure. The numerous other organizations

that have helped rural women to form cooperatives include USAID, YMCA, ADR, JBDA, ICU and RMF. It is evident that participation in producer organizations is crucial for accessing information, advisory services and other rural services, and for engaging in collective action, building social capital, accessing input and output markets, and reaching policymakers. This is unfortunately missed out by Lebanese farmers, particularly small farmers and women producers. However, female-led agro-food processing cooperatives are known for their successful joint efforts.

3.3. Gender and agricultural labour

According to CAS (2020), 3.6 percent of jobs were found in agriculture as of 2018. Of these, 86.7 percent of agricultural jobs were held by men and 13.3 percent by women. Less than 2 percent of working women were employed in agriculture. Informal employment plays a big role in Lebanon; more than a third of those employed worked in the informal sector at their main job (35.2 percent). Among agricultural workers, 85.7 percent were informally employed, most of them being women. As in other countries in the region, women are paid less than their male counterparts as seasonal labourers across the Lebanese farming community, earning approximately half of what their male counterparts earn.

Farm labour contributions by Lebanese women range from income-activities generating (e.g., raising chickens, selling eggs, milking cows and selling butter) to expenditure reduction activities (e.g., preserving and processing food for family or household consumption) or both (Abul Khoudoud, 1998). Both types of activities go largely unrecognized. Moreover, Lebanese rural women engage in labour exchange and mutual support groups.

A study conducted by NOWARA in 2011 showed that women contribute to agricultural activities in various stages and at different levels (NOWARA, 2011).

Food processing tasks are generally dominated by women, while tasks such as harvesting, weeding and postharvest activities are shared equally by both men and women. Other tasks such as pest control and fertilization are men's activities.

Women-headed households are poorer than male-headed households, attributed in part to disparities in agricultural wages. Women are often paid two-thirds to one-half of the wages earned by men for the same number of hours. The average daily wage for women ranges from 7 000–15 000 LBP/day depending on the area and the type of work, whereas that of men ranges from 17 000–25 000 LBP/day. Women work a total of 14–19 hours per day, including domestic work or other family-related work burdens.

According to the 2010 agricultural census, the number of permanent family agricultural labourers is around 165 600 (FAO, 2016b). It appears that 66 percent of holders rely on permanent family labour. The rate is even higher in animal production holdings, reaching 82 percent.

As for the temporary/casual non-family labour force, the total number of work days in 2010 was recorded at approximately 6.7 million days, equivalent to 44 700 permanent workers (assuming that each permanent worker works 150 days per year). The majority of this temporary/casual labour force is present in the North Region (41 percent), followed by the Bekaa Region (27 percent).

No gender-based data pertaining to these indicators were published in the 2010 census.

3.4. Gender and social protection

Farmers lack health insurance for both themselves and their families and lack insurance for their properties against accidents and natural disasters. Although a mutual fund has been established for the insurance of the agricultural sector against natural disasters, it is not yet operational because its legislative and regulatory frameworks have not been completed, and membership is not yet mandatory. It appears that 75 percent of total holders do not have social security insurance (FAO and MOA, 2012). Farmers, including women farmers, working formally in the agriculture sector are not recognized under labour law. The Lebanese Labour Code, passed in 1946, excludes from its provisions those working

in agriculture, both men and women. Accordingly, laws that govern employment matters, such as working hours, maternity leave, health measures, etc., do not protect women working in agriculture. Moreover, the National Social Security Funds (NSSF) exclude temporary labourers, daily paid labourers and seasonal labourers, which are the categories in which the majority of those working in agriculture, including women, fall. Farmers in general have difficulties complying with the registration requirements of the NSSF.

3.5. Gender and agricultural extension and rural advisory services

Worldwide, rural advisory services (RAS) can play an important role in addressing gender inequalities. However, RAS programmes have often fallen short of expectations in the design and implementation of relevant services to help rural women and men achieve food security and generate more income (FAO, 2015).

Multiple sources of RAS are found in Lebanon. RAS are provided through both the public and private sectors, as well as various national and international nongovernmental and parastatal organizations (3 Chambers: commerce, industry and agriculture).

Services such as promotion of new seed varieties and technical advice on fertilizer use, pest control and other issues have been of considerable support to farmers. These types of extension services, however, respond to the priorities of private sector companies and commercial farmers, often neglecting the specific and diverse needs of smallholders and resource-poor farmers, and specifically women.

Non-public RAS activities often lack coordination as well as sustainability, as they are terminated after the donors stop funding. Lack of coordination is evident in overlaps and replications of activities in some areas, and marked gaps in others. Also, there is no mechanism for sharing and expanding successful experiences and lessons learned at the national level. Hence, many valuable achievements are discontinued or lost as NGOs change their focus in response to funding priorities, or leave the country in the case of international ones. Partnership building and coordination among these actors are essential for harmonizing efforts and for efficient use of resources in addressing the needs of poor farmers towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Public bodies involved in RAS include relevant line ministries and related entities directly involved

in agriculture and/or rural development. These include MOA and MOSA. The Social Development Centres of MOSA are key executive instruments for achieving the decentralized development strategy adopted by MOSA. They provide comprehensive services for the benefit and development of local communities. Some of the mandates provided to the Social Development Centres by law include: planning for development, optimization of local resources (including human resources), undertaking field assessments, development of local action plans, study of development projects falling under their respective geographic scopes of work, and coordination with public and private bodies. More than 228 centres today serve as the primary link between the Government and vulnerable rural and urban populations.

MOA services are provided by a department in its Extension and Agricultural Education Division through agricultural centres in the Lebanese *cazas*. To date 30 extension centres have been created in 26 *cazas* (with 2 centres in each the two largest agricultural *cazas* – Baalbeck and Akkar – and an additional centre in Chouf *caza*), providing extended geographical coverage across Lebanese agricultural areas.

MOA has two affiliated bodies: Green Plan (GP) and the Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (LARI). GP is an autonomous body providing land reclamation, irrigation systems and agricultural road construction, based on subsidiaries. Research involving technology and knowledge generation in the field of agriculture is overseen by LARI. An extension system using SMS technology was established by LARI, reaching a large number of registered farmers.

The Lebanese public extension system has a number of challenges that have weakened provision of extension services, such as the scale and complexity of the extension task coupled with limited human and financial resources, lack of political and financial support, pressure to take on additional tasks and lack of viable coordination mechanisms among research institutions and other public and private actors involved in agricultural knowledge, technology and support services.

There are roughly 100 extension agents under MOA. Female extension agents represent 31 percent of these, which is a relatively high number compared to worldwide averages.

Female extension officers often face socio-cultural barriers in their work. In some villages, they suffer

from lack of acceptance by male farmers, making it difficult for them to carry out their work. On the other hand, male extension agents could be equally capable of addressing women farmer's needs as long as they have the necessary capacity to provide gender-sensitive services. Generally, extension officers lack the knowledge, capacities and resources to target women effectively. Capacity building on gender mainstreaming is needed. Extension programming that effectively and specifically addresses women farmer's needs is absent. This is also due to the low number of extension agents (be it male or female) at the peripheries and in small-scale farming communities in Akkar, Minieh and Hermel.

3.6. Gender and agro-food production

3.6.1 Fruit and vegetable production and agro-processing

According to the production survey carried out in 2016 by MOA, vegetables represent around 46 percent of the total agricultural production volume of seasonal crops and 33 percent of the total value of production for the same category. Potatoes represent 36 percent of the value of vegetables followed by tomatoes, at 24 percent.

As for permanent crops, pome fruits and stone fruits represent 16 percent of total value of production for this category, followed by olives with 14 percent and citrus with 10 percent.

Women have a significant presence and level of participation in different fruit and vegetable value chains, taking on roles in planting, harvesting, packing as well as processing, to varying degrees. A study conducted by Mercy Corps in 2014 highlighted the high potential to engage women and to recognize their work in different value chain categories and at different levels of intervention. Those categories were mostly pertaining to produce (tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, berries) and herbs, as well as livestock (Mercy Corps, 2014).

When it comes to marketing fresh fruit and vegetable products, women's roles are marginal, if not absent. It is usually middlemen or traders who deal with the sale of the produce and negotiate the final price. Women often sell their produce through such traders since this is seen as a "men's task." According to farmers interviewed, women are perceived as having weak negotiation powers and often fail to incorporate their own work into the overall selling price, thus making profit margins lower than expected (UNDP, 2020).

In a sample of 150 villages, 96 percent of rural households confirmed preserving and processing food for home consumption (NOWARA, 2011). Women's involvement in the agricultural sector is a well-recognized fact, particularly in developing countries where they are the most important food producers and where they assist their husbands in most of the farming tasks. Yet they are still widely perceived as "housewives" and their involvement in agricultural activities is considered a natural extension of their household role. As a result, the bulk of rural women's contribution are unremunerated and not considered as work in national accounts or even by the women themselves.

As paid or unpaid labourers, women may spend up to 14–19 hours per day in crop and livestock production together with domestic work such as cleaning, cooking, baking and child rearing. A gender division of labour is observed in the Lebanese farming system based on the nature of the agricultural enterprise itself and the operations used in the production process. Men are involved in capital-intensive mechanized crops and operations such as mechanical land preparations, irrigation, spraying and tractor driving, while women are responsible for the labour-intensive work that requires painstaking physical effort and perseverance such as weeding, hand sowing, spraying fertilizers, vegetable pinching, harvesting, packaging, grading, and, to a large extent, food processing for home consumption as well as for sale. The division of labour varies by cropping pattern and farm size (Abul Khoudoud, 1998). In all cases, women perform a large share of the agricultural work, despite a persisting lack of social and financial recognition.

3.6.2 Tobacco value chain and market

This industry functions as a state monopoly. It is managed by the Lebanese Tobacco and Tunbac Monopoly Department (known as Regie), the body organizing all tobacco-related affairs (including planting, pricing, manufacturing, exporting, etc.) through a restrictive licensing system. For various reasons, the tobacco industry in Lebanon represents one of the most intense and complex areas of relations between the state and farmers – a relation that has historically been marked by recurring social and political unrest. Over the years, *al-tabegh* (tobacco) has become a political issue largely associated with the Southerners' struggle against internal and external forces, including the Israeli occupiers. This issue has acquired emotional overtones of patriotism, which go beyond economic as well as political considerations. For a Shi'a

from South Lebanon, the term *al-tabegh* evokes both survival and defeat. In tobacco production, "transactions operate in an exploitative system whose dynamics are reproduced at different levels of social interaction and between the various actors involved. Within that system, household relations develop in a manner which enforces gender inequality and women's underdevelopment" (Attalah, 1997, pp. 16). The Regie president says it would be a losing business for the farmer if he did not use family labour.

According to Regie, tobacco plays a considerable social role in "fostering family relations, as agriculture depends on cooperation between all the family members." Growing permits are issued to family farms and not to individuals, by law.

According to Regie, the total number of tobacco farmers in 2018 was 25 000 families planting in 457 villages, of which 42 percent were in the south of Lebanon, 26 percent in Bekaa and 32 percent in the North region (Regie, 2019). According to the Agricultural Census Project results of 2010, tobacco accounts for 88 percent of all industrial crops, covering around 8 300 ha.

Female family members constitute the majority of the labour force for tobacco production. With the possible exception of land clearance, they participate actively in all phases of tobacco farming. Simultaneously, they are also responsible for all ongoing domestic and family tasks, including in some cases food harvesting and processing, and care for livestock.

Women are responsible for the different cultural practices involved in tobacco production such as preparation of land and seed-bedding (ploughing, disinfecting, sowing, watering, fertilizing) and transplanting, planting, irrigating, leaf cropping and weeding, pest control, leaf-stringing, leaf-drying, leaf-pressing, leaf-packaging and transportation of bales. Women (mothers, daughters of all ages, daughters-in-law and sisters, as well as young boys) gather in circles (either on the house terrace or inside the house in a large room) around piles of tobacco leaves and string them into chains. They exchange stories, sing, or even watch television if available. Female visitors occasionally join in the activities, either out of politeness or habit.

According to the head of Regie, around 20–27 percent of the permits are registered under a female name. No specific extension packages are targeted to female farmers. However, Regie is preparing a strategy to be implemented in 2026 that includes

the organization of training sessions on women's empowerment and targets the daughters of tobacco farmers. Regie is also focusing on the role of females in the countryside through holding tournaments for tobacco that activate communication and competition between females around improving the product quality. Such tournaments are held in more than 17 villages, whether at the village main yard or a municipal building or school, and begin with distributing similar quantities of tobacco leaves of various sizes. Participating female farmers must be between 20–50 years of age to compete in sticking the leaves. The winning female receives a golden lira. In 2014, second place for the Regie annual award for best quality went to a female farmer.

Paid labour in tobacco production it is mostly done by Syrian female labourers (mostly in Akkar and Bekaa). Moreover, some Lebanese paid female labour is practiced in some villages of Akkar, where agriculture is considered the only source of living among residents. Interviews with extension agents of the Ballabeck pointed to a shift from female family labour to labour by Syrian females in Baalbeck-hermel and Bekaa.

3.6.3 Organic farming value chain and market

MOA is giving priority to the organic sector. A national committee comprised of representatives of the public and private sectors, including farmers, was formed in 2010 to issue a regulatory framework for organic farming, and this committee continues to work on programming to support the development of the organic sector.

Registered organic plant products include cereals, potatoes, pulses, leafy vegetables, tubers and bulb vegetables, apples, citruses, mushrooms, cherries, plums, table grapes, apricots, almonds, figs, peaches, grapes for processing, bananas, olives, strawberries, pears, avocado, other fruits, forage crops, permanent grassland meadows, nuts, aromatic plants, wild-harvested herbs, and fallow land maintained as part of organic crop rotation practices. Registered animal products include cows, goats, poultry, and beekeeping products. Processed foods include olive oil, wine, juices, jams, pickles and others.

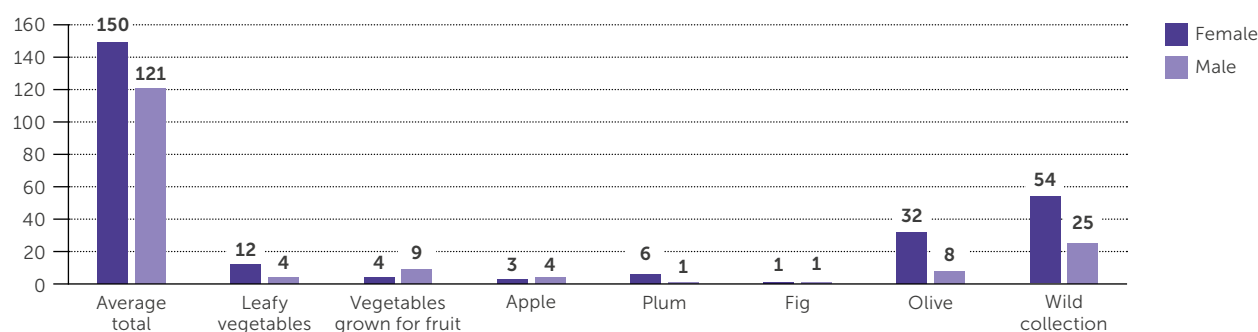
The total number of female organic operators registered at MOA's Plant Protection Department is 150. The number of organic operators that possess land under organic production represent 82 percent of the registered operators, with a total land area of 1 079 ha.

In analysing the data pertaining to the organic farms officially registered farms at MOA, the following gender-related observations were found:

- » The average total farm size is higher for female operators than for males.
- » More specifically, females operate larger average farm sizes than their male counterparts in the cases of leafy vegetables and olive production and wild-harvested herbs and plants for processing into organic food or medical products (see Figure 9).
- » The average age of female operators is 48 years of age, ranging from 30–65 years.
- » Female operators have a considerably high educational level.
- » Female operators represent 14 percent of organic operators, whereas female-male joint operators represent around 3 percent (the categories of importers only and retailers only were omitted from the analysis).

Interviews with female operators showed the following:

- » Organic production is attracting educated farmers and newcomers to the business. If they can get a certification of organic production, it adds a certain value added to the business. Certification is relatively affordable but is a lengthy process that and requires considerable knowhow from the farm operator in order to comply with and adopt the certification body recommendations.
- » Consumer awareness is needed to expand and enhance the organic farming market.
- » Needs specific to female organic farmers include time-saving technology and know-how on practices such as disease control. Like their male counterparts, women organic farmer suffer high costs of inputs, labelling, packing and transport.
- » Advice on farm premises is provided primarily by a few private engineers with high fees ranging from USD 50–200 per farm visit.
- » For women to achieve sustainable organic farm enterprise development, necessary forms of support include entrepreneurship education, business development services, access to markets and advocacy.

Figure 8: Average size of organic farm, by gender of the operator and production type

Source: Author's own, using raw data from MOA's Plant Protection Department

3.7. Gender and livestock

The livestock sector in Lebanon is well known for a number of distinctive products such as Labneh and some cheeses, and it is characterized by the large experience in intensive production, contract farming especially in poultry (MOA, 2014). The small ruminant dairy production sector is an important part of the agriculture sector in Lebanon and a main livelihood source for vulnerable communities in rural areas. Small ruminant herding is mostly concentrated in the Beqaa region around Hermel, West Beqaa, and Zahle. West Beqaa has the largest number of sheep and goats among the three regions based on the 2010 agriculture census, with 88 930 ruminants, followed by Zahle with 69 675 ruminants (UNDP, 2020).

Women carry out a great deal of work that is essential to the smooth operation of these dairy farms. The age of a woman farmer is positively correlated with her engagement in dairy production. Because of narrow traditional definitions of farm work and in Lebanon, however, women's work in the dairy sector goes largely unrecognized.

In smallholder and family farming households, women play a prominent role in animal production, while in market-oriented, higher technology farms, men assume most of the responsibilities. In homesteads, women take care of poultry (with an average of 10–50 backyard chicken), sheep, goats and cattle. They are responsible for all aspects of animal husbandry, especially on farms with less than 3 cows (Abul Khoudoud, 1998). The average age of a women livestock keeper is 50–55 years of age (ibid.). The majority of producers of small ruminants, including women, are active in all parts of the value chain, including production, processing and sale. Women, however, do not participate in herding as it is viewed as men's work since it requires mobility and flexibility

in timing, both of which are difficult for women (UNDP, 2020). Men care for the health of animals and market the by-products, and women carry out all other tasks. Milking and feeding are invariably women's work (and are of course coupled with other domestic tasks such as child care). Women gather fodder, prepare the feed rations, and feed and care for the animals, particularly small ruminants, rabbits and poultry. They also clean stables and the animals and make butter, cheese, yogurt, labneh, and other dairy products. Marketing tasks performed by women include selling fresh milk or processed dairy milk to people coming to their doorsteps from within their same villages or from nearby villages or to middlemen coming to their doors. Through cooperatives, women are more involved at the processing level as well.

The contributions of men increase with distance from homestead (Abul Khoudoud, 1998). For instance, when animals are sick, it is the man's job to go seek the services of a technical veterinarian, while the care of the sick animal is done by the woman. On farms with dairy cows that do not use milking machines, women farmers clean the udders and preparing the cows for milking. Females also engage in labour exchanges and mutual support groups for activities requiring long time allocations.

In the poultry sector, women are mostly involved in poultry system of village or backyard production, with minimal biosecurity and birds/eggs consumed locally. There are around 600 farms with chicken in Lebanon ranging in number from 1–50 per farm. Women farmers' tasks include providing feed and water to the birds, cleaning poultry houses, egg collection and on-farm sales.

Female training needs in livestock production include trainings in the areas of animal nutrition and feed ration mix, disease diagnosis and treatment, dairy

product processing and marketing. Major constraints impeding female work in livestock production include lack of access to extension services, credit and labour-saving technologies. This is in addition to domestic work burdens and lack of time and mobility.

3.8. Gender and fisheries and aquaculture

In the Socio-economic Analysis of the Lebanese Fishing Fleet, a FAO study done in 2013 in the framework of the project "Scientific and Institutional cooperation to support responsible fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean –EastMed", it is stated that the average manpower engaged during fishing operations is of the order of 6 500 commercial fishermen nationally. The fishing community is organized into 29 cooperatives and 5 syndicates, but cooperative membership covers only some 43 percent of those involved in the fishing industry, with no membership by women reported (FAO, 2013).

Interviews conducted for this FAO study with the head of Forestry and Fishery Services and some members of fishermen's cooperatives emphasized that much female activity in fisheries is related to sale and food preparation (mostly for home consumption), mainly in North of Lebanon, Batroun area, Anfe and Alarida. Women are also involved in auction markets of fish and in the preparation and maintenance of fishing nets. Female family members, girls and wives, are also involved in small-scale restaurants where fish is freshly cooked and offered to local consumers as well as tourists. As for aquaculture, there are approximately 200 rainbow trout fish farms nationally, of which 80 percent are in the Hermel area. Women's roles are linked to rural tourism and restaurants that are usually set along sides of the Assi River.

3.9. Gender and forestry

Data from the forestry sector reveal that men do a major part of the exploitation of wood and non-wood forest products (Youness and Estephan, 2005). Indeed, it is perceived that forest-related activities require physical strength that women lack. Women participate more in lands classified as "other wooded lands" and "other lands," where the products are physically less demanding to extract. Such activities include fruit and olive collection and harvesting, olive and laurel soap fabrication, wild plants collection, ornamentals collection and collection of ingredients for essential oils (mostly laurel, sage and oregano). Rural women are considered key actors both in the protection of and sustainable exploitation of

natural resources. They play an important role in conservation (through relief of pressure on the forest) and development (through income-generating activities). These activities, however, are seasonal and do not generate sustainable incomes for women (El-Iraki, 2015). Female forest guards make up less than 10 percent of all forest guards employed by MOA.

3.10. Gender, access to and control over productive resources and benefits

There is no gender discrimination under Lebanese law with regard to acquiring factors of production. Lebanese women do not suffer from any formal or legal discrimination in setting up businesses, acquiring loans from banks or owning property and resources. However, women's access to land and resources is limited due to sectarian inheritance laws described earlier, along with informal social practices and norms, that often lead to women's savings and resources being transferred their male relatives (Abdo and Kerbage, 2012). The same gender bias in access to resources in the agricultural and agro-processing sectors prevalent in many developing countries is also found in Lebanon (ESCWA, 2010). In general, women do not buy land, and inheriting land, especially agricultural land, is restricted by social norms. Land ownership is thus largely exclusive to men. Traditionally, land passes from father to son, while women are relegated to farming small, remote plots of fragmented land. In addition to better land access, other resources such as financial, technological and extension services as well as access to markets are important complements to any reform program (FAO, 2010). It is noteworthy that, in general, land ownership in most of Lebanese villages is often fragmented and land is not registered in the name of its present owner due to the registration process being expensive and difficult. Furthermore, women's lack of access to loans and credit also directly impacts their access to land property. This is a reinforcing cycle since land could constitute the collateral requested by finance institutions.

Policy action is urgently needed, especially considering that gender disparities in land access are unlikely to disappear under existing legal, institutional, social and cultural frameworks and under current economic trends. In fact, the commercialization of agriculture risks excluding women further as it reinforces land tenure concentration, which usually favours male heads of larger farm households.

Training, extension services and technological innovations do not normally target the needs of women. Women generally use lower levels of

technology because of difficulties in access, cultural restrictions on use or disregard for women's crops and livestock in research (Abul Khoudoud, 1998). Also limiting women's access to technology is that they mainly carry out activities dictated by their superiors, such as manually planting or harvesting in a traditional manner. For many of these activities, incorporation of technology, including information technology, would benefit productivity. This, however, requires investment, technical knowledge, and business support, all of which are not easily accessible for women (UNDP, 2020).

In terms of decision making, rural women's level of decision making tends to be commensurate with their level of perceived responsibility in a given task, i.e., whether they are considered to be managing a task or considered to be helpers to males (Abul Khoudoud, 1998). In areas such as house cleaning and child care, women usually hold primary responsibility, while in family farming women tend to be considered helpers. Although they do a considerable part of the manual work in farming, they do not have much saying about when or how the work should be accomplished, like when to plough, plant cultivate or harvest. Since marketing of produce involves dealing with middleman and traders, men are the ones to decide on marketing and prices, except for with processed food. Some grassroots organizations advocate for formally recognizing women's role in agriculture and working with men to enable women to be involved in decision making on matters of cultivation, planting, harvesting and co-managing the post-harvest phase (UNDP, 2020). Among the different types of farming enterprises, these could be separate enterprise, shared tasks, separate fields, agricultural helpers, or women managed farms. Consequently, widowers have greater decision-making power and authority, as they are more involved in management on farms in which no parents or male kin are involved. It is to be noted that the relationship between women's participation in farm work and their involvement in decision making remains poorly specified and is more pronounced when women farmers themselves sometimes underestimates their participation to farm work as well as decision making (Abul Khoudoud, 1998). Moreover, Lebanese rural women lack incentives for engagement in farming activities since farming is associated with a heavy work load and since agriculture is generally considered a losing business due to the overall structural constraints faced by the sector, worsened by the overall political and economic situation of the country.

Lebanese rural women tend to spend more of their incomes on food, education and health for their

families. Income coming from crop and livestock production, agro-processing produce and off-farm production is mostly controlled by women, such as revenues from sale of processed food are mostly handled by women (Abul Khoudoud and Dika Hamze, 2011). It is to be noted that home-consumed products are also processed and stored by women.

3.11. Gender, rural finance and economic empowerment

The vast majority of the Lebanese farmers have little or no access to capital. The high operation costs of small loans and the inability of most small-scale farmers to provide collateral have long dissuaded the country's commercial banks from lending to the agricultural sector. This particularly affects female farmers; according the International Finance Corporation (IFC), only 3 percent of bank loans provided by Lebanese banks go to women (IFC, 2013). There are also some credit schemes such as a small farmers and cooperatives collateral guarantee fund developed by Kafalat and the European Union. According to the last census of 2010, only 1 percent of the holders received credit (FAO and MOA, 2012). There is no indication on the use of these finance schemes by gender. In 2015, according to the ESFD Deputy Manager, the average number of female-led projects financed by ESFD was 1 515 (representing just over 17 percent of the total). These loans totalled LBP 21.6 billion, averaging 14.1 million LBP each.

Small farmers, especially women, have limited access to credit due to the lack of adequate collateral (and lack of land titles) and the high risk involved in small agricultural loans. In addition to not meeting collateral requirements, other challenges faced by rural women in accessing credit include lack of availability of sources of finance and lack of knowledge on the limited sources that are available, as well as lack of familiarity with banking procedures.

Although difficulty in loan repayments is another challenge faced by women, women's loan repayment rates are typically higher than those of men. According to one of the heads of Banque Libanaise pour le Commerce (BLC) and the deputy general manager of Kafalat, failure rates in return on bank loans for women are less than those for men by at least 50 percent (UNDP, 2020). Donor agencies and NGOs have thus actively pursued female clients, positively influencing women's access to loans. Group lending has become a common mechanism for extending credit in both rural and urban areas, especially to women.



Training sessions on the Law of Cooperatives conducted in all Lebanese regions in the context of the Canada-funded project: "Support to Women's Cooperatives and Associations in the Agri-food Sector in Lebanon" named Raedat El Rif. The project is being implemented by FAO since October 2018 in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the General Directorate of Cooperatives (GDC), and the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA).

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4. The Syrian crisis: an emerging challenge for gender

Two challenges now facing the Lebanese Government are further straining the gender situation in Lebanon. These are current political instability and the Syrian influx into Lebanon as a result of the Syrian crisis from 2012 onwards.

The Syrian conflict has resulted in more than one million people fleeing to Lebanon, equivalent to nearly 20 per cent of the Lebanese population of 4.8 million. Despite the efforts of the Lebanese authorities, generous Lebanese citizens, UN agencies, and international and national aid organizations, this overwhelming influx of refugees has created intense stresses, including as refugees find themselves having to take on new roles and responsibilities that may be at odds with their traditional gendered social roles (Masri and Harvey, 2013).

The massive influx of refugees is also impacting labour market dynamics, with 17 percent of Lebanon's working population being non-Lebanese (CAS, 2020), and is having a wide range of consequences related to poverty, access to basic services such as education and health care, and pressure on the physical environment (water, shelter and sanitation). It has also led to social tensions between refugee communities and host communities, with negative perceptions against migrants, such as allegations of criminality, particularly affecting the most vulnerable groups, including women.

According to a 2014 UN report on the impacts of the Syrian crisis on Lebanese youth, the North and the Bekaa host nearly 67 percent of all Syrian refugees fleeing to Lebanon because of the proximity of these two regions to Syria (UNFPA, 2014). The influx

of refugees has led to a significant increase in the population of these two regions, with the ratio of Syrian refugees to Lebanese citizens reaching nearly 1:2 in the Bekaa and 1:4 in the North. The report also found that the distribution of surveyed youth by sex displayed patterns similar to those of the general refugee population, with the number of female youth significantly higher than male youth. The female to male ratio reached 2:1 in the 19–24 age group. Over half of young refugees in the workforce are employees; around 45 percent are daily and/or seasonal workers, mostly in agriculture and construction. Youth occupations are somewhat gender-segregated, with jobs of females, particularly those in the age group of 15–18, predominantly being in agriculture.

With a sudden population growth of more than a 25 percent in a short amount of time, consisting of refugees concentrated in what were already the most deprived areas of the country, Lebanon is facing an emerging significant threat. Not only is the sheer number of refugees straining already deficient basic services, but the concentration of refugees in the country's poorest communities is deepening poverty and increasing inequalities and geographical disparities. In the Bekaa and Akkar, the large majority of paid seasonal workers are Syrians. Of these, two categories may be distinguished. The first is Syrian migrant workers, women and men of Syrian nationality who have been working as agricultural labour in Lebanon for several years. The second is Syrian refugees, both women and men who have been displaced from Syria due to the conflict. An estimated 10 percent of the refugee population has had previous experience in agriculture (International Rescue Committee *et al.*, 2013).

A noteworthy trend is the substitution of Lebanese female farm labour with Syrian female farm labour. This suggests a possible shift in gender roles as a consequence of the Syrian crisis. Heavy involvement of Syrian female labour in seasonal farm activities (e.g. planting, weeding, harvesting, packaging and grading) can be observed, usually at half the earnings of their Syrian male counterparts, who in turn have lower daily earnings than their Lebanese peers. The female Syrian labourers residing in Lebanese rural areas are particularly marginalized, with lesser access to economic benefits or social protection measures. This female–female substitution, as explained by one of the Lebanese female farmers interviewed, is contributing to decreasing the burden of work for Lebanese females, as some of their tasks have shifted to the lower cost Syrian labourers.

It also bears noting that the current work legislation regarding refugees also contributes to increased instability and informality of employment in Lebanon. In January 2015, the procurement of required legal papers became more complex and costly for most refugees, greatly favouring those with adequate financial resources. Around 70 percent of the total refugee population lost their valid legal permit to stay due to those measures (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2016). As of 2017, any displaced people who start working in Lebanon lose their humanitarian refugee status. This indirectly deprives refugees of the right to work, leading to illegal work with worse work conditions and without any legal protection or social security (UNDP, 2020). Both male and female refugees face these challenges, but refugee women face more challenges in terms of market entry and promotion amid greater restrictions on employment opportunities.

As the crisis affects men and women differently, the food security component of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) (2017–2020) promotes targeted interventions focused on the different needs of affected populations.¹³ The LCRP includes assessments and monitoring surveys to collect data disaggregated by gender to the extent possible, promoting gender analysis and participation of all groups in programme design and implementation. Provision of support is focused on the most vulnerable groups, such as women-headed households, women of reproductive age, and pregnant and lactating women. Examples gender-related interventions are inclusion of women-headed households as a variable in determining vulnerable households to target for assistance and targeting women farmers equally to male farmers.

These efforts will help to mainstream gender throughout all stages of the humanitarian programming cycle. Other tools being used for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian response are the Global Food Security Cluster/sector guidelines on Protection and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action.

The vast majority of agricultural livelihoods projects aim to target women and men as equally as possible. Partners need to continue working on improving social protection systems to foster sustainable and equitable rural development, poverty reduction and food security, taking into consideration the specific needs of women-headed households.

¹³ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, Food security and Agriculture chapter, 2019. See in: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/68661.pdf>



Members of various cooperatives and women groups from the Beqaa, part of the FAO project "Support to Women's Cooperatives and Associations in the Agri-food Sector in Lebanon" known as the "Raidat El Rif", funded by Canada and implemented in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. The project aims to support women's cooperatives and associations by promoting a social and cultural environment that enables women's economic empowerment while also increasing the opportunity for these cooperatives and associations to participate in local economies to establish or expand agri-food income-generating enterprises. (2020)

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5. Stakeholder analysis



The following stakeholder analysis includes descriptions of some of the main actors working toward gender equality and women's empowerment in Lebanon, in the interest of identifying potential partnerships for FAO to build or strengthen in its work on gender in Lebanon.

Public sector/institutional actors

- » The **National Commission for the Lebanese Women (NCLW)** has advisory, coordinating and executive duties. The NCLW's objectives are achieving women's empowerment and ensuring gender equality through the preparation and implementation of gender equality strategies and policies. The Commission also fosters networking and cooperation among Lebanese nongovernmental institutions and public institutions on issues related to gender mainstreaming through focal points in all relevant ministries, while ensuring respect of gender-related international conventions. It is also in charge of CEDAW reporting.
- » The **Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)** has developed numerous strategies integrating gender issues and women's empowerment. FAO is currently assisting MOA by reviewing MOA's ongoing strategy to integrate more gender components, in preparing a strategy and an action plan for 2021–2025 and in identifying SDG targets and indicators for MOA to report on. MOA is also in charge of collecting gender-disaggregated rural and agricultural national statistics and of gender auditing and reporting. It also plays a role into the planning of a gender-sensitive CPF and programme implementation on national level through its agricultural extension centres and carries out capacity development in gender mainstreaming in agriculture through its agricultural vocational schools.
- » The **National Observatory for Women in Agriculture and Rural Areas (NOWARA)** is the unit in charge of gender policies in MOA. It has implemented many support activities addressing the different needs of rural women in various areas, including economic empowerment, capacity building, enhancing women's entrepreneurial skills, promoting awareness and highlighting the contributions of women and girls to rural and agricultural development, while conducting situational analysis studies of rural women. The institutional status of NOWARA is being reviewed for possible legalization with the support of FAO through its project supporting women's cooperatives and associations in Lebanon's agri-food sector.
- » The **Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA)** developed a **Women's Affairs Division** to formulate and institute programmes that respond to the needs of women and improve and strengthen their capacities. It is also responsible for proposing budgets earmarking the funds needed to implement such programmes in coordination with other line ministries. After conducting a gender audit exercise, MOSA developed a strategy to strengthen gender equality both in its programmes and services. MOSA developed its social protection and gender issues capacity building competences on national level mainly through its 228 development centres, key executive instruments for decentralized development strategies.
- » The **Parliamentary Commission for the Woman and the Child** is actively involved with the civil society movement against gender inequalities in Lebanon and produced a study on the third MDG on gender with the support of UNDP in 2013.
- » The **Central Administration of Statistics (CAS)** is a public administration body within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Its mandate is to collect, process, produce and disseminate social and economic statistics at the national level and to provide all users with evidence-based information

for decision making. CAS is also in charge of the technical supervision of statistics produced by other ministries and public bodies as well as improving methods and harmonizing statistics.

UN organizations

- » The **UN Country Team (UNCT)** plays a significant role in gender equality and women's empowerment. Together with NCLW, it is in charge of CEDAW reporting and is currently implementing around 43 GEWE projects at the national level focusing on diverse issues including women's economic participation and empowerment, women's political participation, women's increased participation in the security sector, and the prevention and response to gender-based violence. The majority of programmes target the Lebanese population, but also Palestine, Syrian and other refugees (UNCT Lebanon, 2019).
 - » The **Gender Working Group (GWG)** strengthens the UNCT's analysis and coordinates joint efforts of UN entities to promote gender equality in Lebanon, with a view to supporting progress toward outputs and outcomes of the UN Strategic Framework (UNSF) 2017–2020. Among its main activities are conducting regular reviews of the UNSF Annual Joint Work Plans, collaborating with the UN Working Group for Data & Statistics to increase availability, analysis and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data in Lebanon, and supporting gender equality-related dialogue with government counterparts (mainly NCLW). It is also responsible for the implementation of recommendations made by UNCT's SWAP-Scorecard assessment to improve gender mainstreaming across the UNCT.¹⁴ This technical group is led by UN Women and UNFPA and is composed of Gender Focal Points (GFP) of all UN agencies.
 - » **UN Women** offers trainings to women from disadvantaged rural areas, in particular in the ICTs sector. It has also published studies on CEDAW and Lebanese legislation and has supported the NCLW in the preparation of its national plan for the promotion of women's rights. UN Women is currently implementing multiple projects at the national and local levels in collaboration with other
- UN agencies, including FAO and UNDP, to support of women's cooperatives and associations in the agri-food sector.
 - » The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** has supported gender equality partnerships focused on communities, municipalities, the Ministry of Justice and MOSA. It has also undertaken gender mapping of NGOs and has supported the formation and capacity building of rural women's cooperatives, specifically in the south of Lebanon.
 - » The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** has identified five priority areas for action to improve women's employment and has initiated long-term projects in gender equality and workers' rights in the informal sector (starting in 2008). In 2007, ILO and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) launched the two-year regional project "Gender equality and workers' rights in the Arab states' informal economies." This initiative advocated for the adoption of fundamental reforms to give all employees, Lebanese and foreigners in formal and informal sectors, equitable social security coverage. In 2018, ILO focused on the role of cooperatives in Lebanon and published a study on agricultural and agro-food cooperative in Lebanon. ILO supports the Ministry of Labour on gender-sensitive labour law reform and the Centre for Administrative Statistics on the development of the Labour Force Survey, including collection of sex-disaggregated data.
 - » The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** is supporting NCLW and other national gender institutions through its various activities, especially in preparing the ten-year National Women's Strategy in Lebanon and its associated action plan and in conducting capacity-building trainings and thematic workshops for gender focal points of NCLW. It has also carried out a series of assessments, together with MOSA, on the impacts of the 2006 war on vulnerable groups, including women-headed households.
 - » The **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)** established a Centre for Women in 2003. It aims to promote women's empowerment in three areas: economic (poverty reduction), social (gender roles and partnership within the family) and political (sharing decision making and women's political participation). The centre focuses on raising public awareness of women's

¹⁴ The UNCT-SWAP Scorecard is a standardized assessment of UN country-level gender mainstreaming practices and performance that is aimed at ensuring accountability of senior managers and improving UNCT performance.

issues and putting CEDAW into full practice. It also assesses the situation of women in the ESCWA region by compiling gender data and producing country profiles to help states prepare action plans and draft laws in support of gender justice. It has published a number of studies on gender, including *Gender in Agriculture and Agro-processing in Lebanon* (2001), *Addressing Barriers to Women's Economic Participation in the ESCWA Region* (2012), and *Women in the Judiciary in the Arab States: Removing Barriers, Increasing Numbers* (2019).

- » The **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** implemented the Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development (LIVCD) program, a six-year project (2012–2019) that provides income-generating opportunities to small businesses while creating jobs for rural populations, in particular women and youth. The project is based on value chain approach focused on building linkages among actors along value chains. This market-driven project offers technical assistance to disseminate innovative agricultural practices and technologies and build capacities through customized trainings, including trainings targeting women.

International NGOs

- » **REACH** has partnered with Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNICEF to conduct a country-wide community-level vulnerability assessment to inform the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP); with the World Food Programme to provide data collection support to the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees for beneficiary targeting; with SNAP (Syria Needs Analysis Project) and FAO to conduct a food security and livelihoods assessment of Lebanese host communities to inform the sector response; and with UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to contribute to the development of “back to school” interventions. In 2014, it further partnered with UNHCR to establish an Information Management (IM) Hub in Akkar, to provide support to operational level coordination.
- » **Oxfam International** has a regional Gender Justice Hub that administers a regional gender justice programme and a Lebanon programme working on water and sanitation activities, social protection and emergency food and sustainable livelihoods programmes. Oxfam works with local Lebanese NGOs and local municipalities.
- » **Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria Onlus (ICU)** has developed many interventions related to agriculture, mainly around capacity building and green technology in the olive and olive oil sector. In 2012, under its Community Empowerment and Livelihood Enhancement Project (funded by the Italian Government) and together with MOA, it identified a number of model cooperatives in food processing and other agro-industries were established and linked with markets, comprising 38 food-processing women cooperatives (with 328 members targeted). The cooperatives were supported with provision of essential equipment and assistance with renovations, excluding major structural works or building shells.
- » **Mercy Corps** focuses on fostering a healthy and sustainable rural environment, expanding economic opportunities, rehabilitating infrastructure and improving community life in marginalized areas. Its main interventions areas are agriculture, development, relief services, shelter and non-food items. It conducted a *Small Ruminant Dairy Value Chain Analysis* in 2014 (Mercy Corps, 2014).
- » **World Vision** is implementing an Early Childhood Education (ECE) programme in Lebanon to support vulnerable Syrian refugee children in Akkar to access and remain in education, a Water Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) programme, and a Basic Assistance and Livelihoods program that has been working with Syrian refugees since 2011, with attention to the specific issues and needs of girls and women.
- » **AVISI** is developing projects aimed at welcoming refugees and providing them with good conditions of life, giving work to the men of the family, protecting women and children, and ensuring that the youngest children receive some education. Among courses offered to young Syrians, there is an emphasis on agriculture, aiming to train teachers and to provide environments suitable for practical experiments, such as with greenhouses, plants and seeds. The “Back to the Future” project (first phase from 2016–2019 and second from 2019–2021) has the overall objective of guaranteeing a protective learning environment to vulnerable girls and boys in Lebanon and ensuring that those in marginalized communities have access to integrated quality basic education and protection.
- » **Intersos** has been operational in Lebanon since 2013 with the Syrian crisis. Their interventions

focus on the protection of the most vulnerable groups, with special attention to children and the fight against gender violence. Their activities include legal, psychosocial and gender support to victims of violence across refugee camps and common shelters, especially women, as well as children and the elderly, achieved through awareness-raising campaigns and training courses focused on the management and prevention of gender-based violence.

- » **ACTED** has been present in Lebanon since 2006. Along with projects supporting Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities, ACTED is currently supporting women through projects such as:
 - » increasing women's involvement in the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon;
 - » supporting women refugees and host community Nationals to respond to the impact of the Syria crisis through economic empowerment in the ICT sector; and
 - » mitigation and response to gender-based violence and enhancing access to reproductive health services in vulnerable neighbourhoods of Tripoli and Beirut (a 3-month intervention in response to the Covid19 crisis)
- » **Danish Refugee Council (DRC)** is currently implementing a multi-sectoral humanitarian portfolio in Lebanon, encompassing programmes in the areas of social protection, economic recovery and risk education. Through its specialized protection services, DRC delivers a package of response and prevention services including psycho-social support, case management and community-based protection, spanning both child protection and gender-based violence needs and targeting affected individuals across targeted implementation areas.
- » **CARE International** has operated in Lebanon since 2013 to support the growing needs of Syrian refugees. Its emergency response efforts include protecting the rights of vulnerable women and helping prevent gender-based violence, as well as supporting women's empowerment activities.
- » **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** has provided emergency and long-term services for Syrians and the struggling Lebanese communities hosting them since 2012. IRC assists vulnerable women through providing safe spaces for women and girls to gather, share information and receive emotional support, as well as crisis counselling and social work assistance.
- » **Terre des Hommes**, within its work scope in Lebanon during the Syrian crisis, has reached 1 320 girls at risk of violence through mobile units or safe places. The organization also has a project to protect young refugee girls from early marriage and childbearing.

National and local NGOs

- » **Association for the Development of Rural Capacities (ADR)** supports rural communities in acquiring the knowledge and capabilities to improve and promote their standard of living through three main programmes: (1) a microcredit programme; (2) a vocational training and skills upgrading skills programme; and (3) an agricultural programme (CASUR), in addition to ad-hoc projects in rural development and community empowerment. ADR prioritizes partnerships with local communities, municipalities, cooperatives and associations, mainly in the south of Lebanon.
- » **Lebanon Support** developed the Gender Collaborative Information & Research Network, which is an online collaborative platform. It is part of Lebanon Support's Civil Society Knowledge Centre and brings together civil society organizations, researchers, practitioners and experts to enhance local and national capacities, improve access to knowledge and its development, and provide evidence-based research, information and literature on gender issues and concerns.
- » **CRTD.A** conducts research and training for the political and economic empowerment of women. It launched the My Nationality Campaign in 2017, demanding a gender-inclusive Nationality Law, in line with CEDAW provisions, by amending existing discriminatory provisions of the Lebanese Nationality Law that prevent women from giving their nationality to their children or husbands. It also organizes workshops on women's leadership. Its Women Economic Empowerment Project (WEEP) has opened Namlieh, an outlet store in Beirut, to help market goods produced by rural women's cooperatives. CRTD.A also supports women in marketing their traditional goods through its direct marketing channels (catering and healthy food store/kitchen) and in improving their food cooking techniques, food safety and hygiene. It also facilitates access to internal and external clients, organizes or participates in marketing events and engages in fair trade initiatives.

- » **Al Majmoua** is a non-profit microfinance institution that focuses on supporting micro-entrepreneurs, particularly women, in developing sustainable businesses across Lebanon. It offers group and individual loans and free non-financial services to both borrowers and non-borrowers through its network of 22 branches throughout Lebanon. Since 1997 it has been providing microcredit to women's groups. It couples its credit services with training on marketing and production of goods.
- » **Emkan** aims to improve the income level of marginalized low-wage earners, stimulate economic activities and create job opportunities for low-income groups, including youth and women, in urban and rural communities. While the NGO is primarily focused on community development through extension programmes and the Akkar Agricultural Center, it also developed Emkan Finance to provide microfinance services through its branches in Akkar, Beirut, Chtoura, Sidon, Tripoli and Tyre to the largest number possible of economically active low-income individuals in Lebanon. Rural women are among the main beneficiaries.
- » **Lebanese League for Business Women (LLBW)** is an association that brings together professional women and provides them with a platform for sharing experiences, developing competencies and skills, establishing networks, exchanging expertise, accessing funds and mentorship. Through its Women Entrepreneurs Program, it aims to contribute to women's empowerment in the regions of North Lebanon and Beqaa. In 2016, LLBW launched the initiative Girls Got IT under the UNICEF-funded programme Initiation to ICT and Technology for Girls and Marginalized Youth, in partnership with four other NGOs. It is now focusing on the capacity development of young Syrian refugees through its Digital Skills Training.
- » **Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU)** is an inter-disciplinary research and development centre specialized in community development and sustainable agriculture hosted at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB). It launched the Climate-Smart Livelihoods Initiatives and Market Access Tailoring (CLIMAT) project in 2018 to improve the skills, capacities and livelihood opportunities of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees, particularly women, in Northeast Baalbeck and West Beqaa. Through its Kitchen Gardens project for Syrian refugees, ESDU also supports local food provision and assistance, including through existing community kitchens that are mostly driven by women.
- » **The Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development & Family Empowerment (LFPADe)** contributes to humanitarian, health, social and cultural development in order to achieve balanced national development that ensures the stability and survival of the family and the empowerment of women and youth. LFPADe has developed social and medical programmes and activities for women and in 2013 implemented a project aimed at improving the conditions of rural women by providing them with computer literacy skills, supported by UNDP. Current projects are more oriented toward health, including reproductive and sexual health awareness.
- » The **Working Women League** is an NGO created under the umbrella of the Lebanese Women's Council. It strives to assist working women in all fields by securing them with better working conditions.
- » The **Lebanese Democratic Women's Gathering (RDFL)** represents part of the secular democratic women's movement. It works with the democratic forces to promote women's status, participation and empowerment, aiming to achieve full equality between both sexes. It focuses on advocacy and capacity development activities, for example, holding training sessions on women's human rights and conducting adult literacy sessions, mostly targeting rural women. It is particularly active on issues of gender based-violence and has established listening centres to support victimized women, as well as publishing studies and deliver trainings on the subject.
- » The **Women Association of Deir Al-Ahmar (WADA)** has the mission of promoting the role of women in rural development and in the welfare of society in the region around Deir El Ahmar. The association established the WADA Centre, a space dedicated to sustainable rural development and the empowerment of local communities, promoting rural tourism and agro-tourism through the sale of craft products, food tours and other touristic programmes. The Centre also raises awareness on the working and living conditions of rural women.
- » The **Makhzoumi Foundation** seeks to empower the communities in Lebanon to achieve self-sufficient independence via improved prospects.

It runs various programmes in the areas of healthcare, vocational training, microcredit, environment, and development and implements relief projects, including those focused on the specific needs of women and girls.

- » **The René Mouawad Foundation (RMF)** is involved in agricultural activities through its Agricultural Center of the North. The centre includes fruit and vegetable sorting, packaging and cold storage units, dairy and ice cream production units, an animal farm and a plant nursery. RMF runs several successful women's empowerment projects, including the ongoing Women's Economic Participation in North and Mount Lebanon project to address women's limited access to, control of, and ability to benefit from economic opportunities, focusing on specific selected agricultural and non-agricultural value chains.
- » **YMCA** is focused on strengthening the rights and economic opportunities of women throughout Lebanon, including through supporting the development of women's agricultural cooperatives. Food production has been coordinated by the YMCA, under the program Atayeb al Rif Cooperative ("Rural Delights" in Arabic). Originally, this program aimed at providing rural women in Lebanon with income generation opportunities and Atayeb al Rif Coop is now responsible for orders and marketing – both nationally and internationally – for over 50 women's cooperatives around the country.
- » **LEDA Bekaa** was established in March 2011 under the UNDP Art Gold Program as an innovative model of partnership between public and private stakeholder. It works to institutionalize the means for reducing poverty and regional disparities through strategic interventions for the enhancement of the economic sectors in the Bekaa region. Its initiatives span the areas of agriculture, development, humanitarian and development financing, and labour and livelihoods. It is active in capacity building for women producers and women's cooperatives, as well as advocacy around gender awareness in Bekaa.
- » **Catholic Relief Services** is particularly active in the current refugees crisis faced by Lebanon and is working with many organizations to meet resulting humanitarian needs through various types of assistance, including food, non-food items, hygiene kits, etc. It helps millions of smallholder farmers worldwide, including in Lebanon, to recover from natural disasters and civil strife, to build resilient farming systems, and to grow them into agro-enterprises that engage successfully with markets.
- » **ABAAD** advocates for the development and implementation of policies and laws that enhance women's participation through a rights-based approach grounded in gender justice. As a leading agency on gender equality in the MENA region, ABAAD also seeks to support and build the capacities of local, regional and international entities working on protection programmes, case management, sexual and reproductive health and rights, mental health and psychological support and sexual diversity. Through its pioneer Masculinities programme, ABAAD engages men in working towards an equitable society free of hegemonic masculinities and violence against women.
- » **KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation** is a Lebanese feminist secular NGO established in 2005 that seeks to foster a society free of social, economic and legal patriarchal structures that discriminate against women. KAFA's focus areas include family violence, exploitation and trafficking of women, especially among migrant domestic workers and women in prostitution, and child protection, particularly from sexual abuse and family violence.
- » Incorporated in 2001, **Safadi Foundation** works to empower vulnerable communities in Lebanon, with a specific focus on women and youth, to find sustainable solutions that will enable them to play a participatory role in the country's national development process. The foundation aims to reduce socio-economic regional disparities, decrease the gender gap, and narrow the divide between citizens and their governing institutions. It partnered with ABAAD on a project to enhance the socio-economic integration of women survivors of gender-based violence and to protect against their further exploitation through a capacity-building programme in safe shelters to build professional and personal skills.
- » **Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT)** is mobilizing the potential of young people and the power of technology in Lebanon. It supports young girls through Girls Got IT Lebanon programme, where girls are inspired to consider careers and entrepreneurship in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

- » **Akkar Network for Development (AND)** is a leading local organization working with women, youth, children and local authorities. In 2017, AND partnered with ILO to identify potential opportunities for women's economic empowerment in potato and leafy green vegetable value chains.
- » **American University of Beirut (AUB)** supports gender equality and women's empowerment through various projects and initiatives, such as "Female Academic Role Model Empowerment, Equality and Sustainability at Universities in Mediterranean Region," which aims to increase female representation at senior levels in higher education institutions and university boards, mainly in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, through empowerment of female academics. Additionally, AUB students organized International Biodiversity Day (IBDAA) 2020 online, with the theme of women's connection to climate change, highlighting two SDGs, including SDG 5 on gender equality.
- » Founded in 1988, **Azm and Saade (AWS)** supports important humanitarian, developmental, educational and social initiatives that serve the community and strengthen the social role of the individual on all levels through knowledge and skills development. Among its goals, AWS supports women's empowerment through providing socio-economical services that ease the suffering of local communities in Tripoli in particular and in the North in general, through capacity development of youth and women and through the establishment of safe public places.
- » The **Women's Program Association (WPA)** is one of the longest standing organizations serving women in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. It has launched various activities including, in 2013, Soufra, a catering line that allows Palestinian women to preserve their culture through food while also generating income. Today the NGO operates across 9 out of 12 Palestinian refugee camps, providing education, professional trainings, leadership skills and unwavering support to women and youth.



Member of a cooperative from the Bekaa, Lebanon part of the FAO project "Support to Women's Cooperatives and Associations in the Agri-food Sector in Lebanon" known as the "Raidat El Rif", funded by Canada and implemented in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. The project aims to support women's cooperatives and associations by promoting a social and cultural environment that enables women's economic empowerment while also increasing the opportunity for these cooperatives and associations to participate in local economies to establish or expand agri-food income-generating enterprises.

6. Key findings and recommendations

6.1 Key findings

The desk review conducted for this Assessment showed the existence of considerable reporting on gender equality issues by the various international actors in Lebanon, such as USAID, WB, European Union, UNDP, CRTD.A and ESCWA. However, there is *no similar documentation on women in agriculture and rural areas*. In 2020, in the framework of a project funded by Canada,¹⁵ FAO commissioned a gender analysis of the agri-food sector in Lebanon to identify value chains opportunities for women's cooperatives and associations. This initiative is expected to highlight some areas of work and opportunities for women in agriculture and rural areas and to inform future strategies, programmes and projects at the national level.

Many interventions by different civil society groups and NGOs, led by the agenda of international donors, have been addressing women's issues from human rights perspectives, but less from economic participation or business development perspectives, particularly in rural areas. Rural women are less likely have their needs and priorities addressed. This reality is compounded by the challenge that neither gender analysis nor gender budgeting in programmes and projects has been practiced in Lebanon. Furthermore, despite openings for the integration of gender as a category of analysis in economics since the 1990s, the Government of Lebanon has yet to systematically incorporate gender analysis at all levels (micro, meso and macro) in the agricultural and rural realm. As a result, *the role of women in agriculture has been undervalued in most official data*. Moreover,

inconsistencies in reporting, limited resources for data collection and the use of narrow definitions of work and employment have failed to capture the real contributions of women in agriculture.

Development indicators reveal that Lebanese women experience relatively high levels of health and education, but are lacking a commensurate presence in the public sphere. Such gains in health and education are not reflected in women's economic empowerment, advancement in politics or full equality under the law (MOSA, 2014).

Women are responsible for a significant number of agricultural activities such as sowing, weeding, harvesting and processing. They are the backbone of the tobacco sector and they are leading initiatives for organic farming in Lebanon, a promising and attractive enterprise for young, innovative and educated female producers. Women are also heavily involved in fruit and olive tree harvesting and in vegetable production in greenhouses, yet when it comes to marketing fresh fruit and vegetable products, women's roles are marginal, if not absent. Women work up to 14 hour a day, in addition to domestic work and child and elder care, in farm households. Their work is mostly in family agriculture or subsistence farming, generally done on less than 1 ha of land (with an average holding of 0.6 ha). They produce mostly staple crops for household consumption and small-scale cash crops for the market, manually or with rudimentary equipment, while men are responsible for crops that are grown at a larger scale and requiring mechanization. Women also work as seasonal farm labourers, particularly during harvesting time.

Women also play a role in the livestock and poultry sector, particularly in smallholder and family farming households, while men assume most

¹⁵ This study has been conducted as part of a three-year project, funded by Canada, on "Support to women cooperatives and associations in the agri-food sector of Lebanon" (GCP/CAN/030/LEB).

of the responsibilities in market-oriented, higher technology farms, their contributions increasing with distance from the homestead. Regarding the fisheries sector, women's contributions are usually linked to small-scale restaurants, rural tourism and home consumption, generally lacking any significant income generation. In terms of areas of potential growth, organic farming has been identified as a priority area by MOA and constitutes a promising market for rural women, if they are included and trained adequately.

Furthermore, *women face overt and implicit discrimination in access to productive resources such as land and to services such as credit and extension.* Capacity building on gender mainstreaming is needed and would be particularly useful in extension programmes in which women farmers' needs are not specifically considered. Additionally, it appears that women's needs as farmers are often neglected in favour of programmes aimed at household responsibilities. Programmes have to be more innovative and flexible to account for social and cultural obstacles and for time and mobility constraints.

Attempts to support women's enterprise development, such as projects focused on the multiplication of rural organizations and cooperatives, have been made in Lebanon by various donors and NGOs. Rural women have demonstrated their capacity to mostly organize themselves and to assume leadership positions in agro-processing and marketing and rural artisanal produce organizations, but the cooperatives movement remains male-dominated. Furthermore, the vision and discourse of support organizations is often not coherently linked to policies and practices (Abdo and Kerbage, 2012). This can be seen at the advocacy level, for instance, in the lack of lobbying for social provisions for low-income women, such as social security and other forms of social protection (ibid.). Farmers, including women farmers, working formally in the agriculture sector are not recognized under labour law especially if they are seasonal workers. Advocacy and policy changes are needed in these areas.

Another challenge to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in rural areas is a *lack of cooperation among intervening organizations leading to a duplication of efforts and over-supply of projects in the same areas.* Furthermore, to systemically address gender equality issues in agriculture, policy action and creation of structural macroeconomic reforms are required. National efforts led by the international community alone with no systematic efforts and planning from the State will only result in making the work of women even

more invisible and informal. This is even more critical considering the current economic situation and the refugee crisis. Humanitarian programming and the projects developed in the area of food security require the targeting of men and women as equally as possible, including women-headed households.

FAO Lebanon, through the implementation of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality and its participation in the gender focal points network, contributes to the mainstreaming of gender equality in all FAO programmes. Moreover, a growing number of women's empowerment projects have been and will be developed. Furthermore, a capacity building assessment of all FAO staff in Lebanon has been conducted, followed by the provision of a specially adapted gender-based capacity-building programme.

6.2 Recommendations

This Assessment concludes with the following recommendations for the Government of Lebanon and FAO.

For the Government and its institutions:

- » Improve cooperation and communication on gender issues among ministries, NCLW and active civil society and international organizations;
- » Reinforce the role of gender focal points in ministries and other public institutions to ensure effective gender mainstreaming;
- » Develop gender-sensitive agriculture policies that address the specific needs of the rural population, particularly the empowerment of rural women, in compliance with Article 14 of CEDAW;
- » Promote the integration of sex-disaggregated data in agricultural and rural-related statistics, studies and other knowledge products;
- » Encourage and capacitate women to be further engaged in rural women's organizations such as cooperatives and associations;
- » Reinforce capacity building on gender mainstreaming and tailor training and extension programmes to the specific needs of women agricultural workers;
- » Recognize the scope of rural women's involvement in agro-food value chains, including their involvement in crop production, livestock and

fishing activities as agricultural producers in their own right, and promote their access to the entire value chain, especially commercial opportunities;

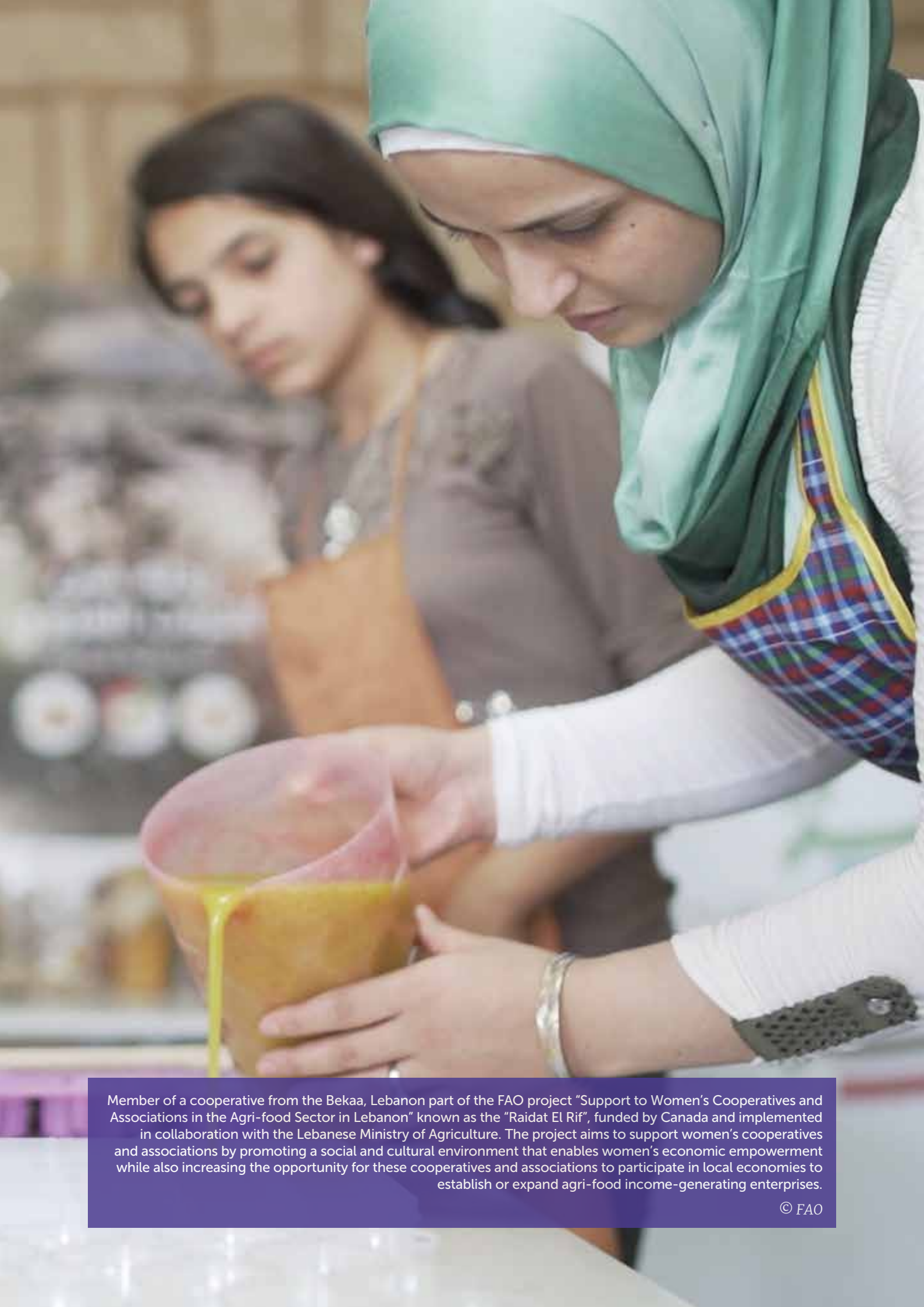
- » Improve rural women's access to finance, land, agricultural production inputs, extension services and participation in decision making in rural areas;
- » Further develop and improve extension services, particularly with regard to technology and human and financial resources, in order to better reach and serve rural women;
- » Strengthen the role of women within promising value chains and markets such as organic farming by facilitating certification processes and providing entrepreneurship education, business development services and other relevant capacity development;
- » Include gender analysis in all projects;
- » Establish policies and legal measures to address the existing gaps between men and women, such as the pay gap in the agricultural sector;
- » At the policy level, make changes to labour law and personal status law to create an enabling environment for the economic integration and success of women;
- » At the community level, organize awareness campaigns on women's roles, capacities and rights, targeted to both men and women, to promote women's economic empowerment and break stereotypes; and
- » To effectively tackle gender issues related to the current refugee crisis, facilitate monitoring of the food security interventions implemented under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, with a focus on the different needs of specific affected populations, including women.

For FAO:

- » Include gender analysis in the Country Programming Framework;
- » Support MOA to include specific actions addressing gender issues and rural women's empowerment in its upcoming 5 Year Agricultural Strategy (2021–2025);
- » Provide policy advice and support to the Government in generating concrete proposals for

institutional arrangements and comprehensive guidelines and procedures that enhance the participation of rural women in agriculture and rural development governance;

- » Conduct a gender equality stocktaking exercise within the FAO country office to provide a basis for better implementation of gender mainstreaming, including in processes and performance measures;
- » Incorporate gender analysis into the formulation of field programmes and projects, focusing on gender mainstreaming and women-targeted interventions. This could focus on economic empowerment of rural women and their organizations (e.g. agricultural cooperatives) along specified value chains (dairy, produce, organic farming) or agro-processing cooperatives, supporting them in accessing markets, credit facilities and RAS in order to grow their businesses;
- » Support the generation, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data in agriculture, with particular emphasis on agricultural censuses, rural household surveys and other data sources related to agriculture and food security. This could include gender capacity trainings to improve the skills of national statisticians, researchers, planners and policy makers in collecting, tabulating, analysing and using sex-disaggregated agricultural data;
- » Establish/strengthen partnerships with other UN agencies, international organizations, relevant national institutions and civil society groups in the areas of agriculture and rural development to ensure learning, exchange, coordination and cooperation, together with the ministries working with rural areas and the NCLW;
- » Develop and implement an advocacy and awareness raising strategy on gender equality targeted to rural communities that disseminates success stories and good practices from the country and regional levels;
- » Integrate practical methods and tools for gender mainstreaming into FAO training materials, possibly along thematic areas reflecting the projects implemented by FAO; and
- » Support the Government in enhancing the capacity of its institutions both in using sex-disaggregated statistics and in formulating gender-sensitive agricultural and rural development policies.



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Women beneficiaries of the FAO project "Upgrading the Technical Agriculture Education System in Lebanon" funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, UNICEF, ILO, and AVSI. Agricultural Technical School, 2019.

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8. Annex



List of interviewees

Name	Function
Dani Bassil	Head of Agriculture Center - Batroun
Marwa Hamoud	Head of Agriculture Center – Koura
Mokhles BouKdal	Head of Agriculture Center- Akkar
Sonia Abiad	Head of Agriculture Center- Minieh-Dannieh
Taha Moustapha	Head of Agriculture Center- Hrar
Milia Chbeir	Head of Agriculture Center- Chhim
Rabih Al Ali	Head of Agriculture Center- Alay
Elie Fares	Head of Agriculture Center- Jezzine
Dina Mansour	Head of Agriculture Center- Tyr
Hussein Al Sakka	Head of Agriculture Center- Binet Jbeil
Ismail Amine	Head of Agriculture Center- Hasbayya
Petra Aakoury	Head of Agriculture Center- Deir El Ahmar
Houssam Sleiman	Head of Agriculture Center- Baalbeck
Dr. Leila Azouri	NCLW
Joumana Aboul Rouss	NCLW
Wafa Dika Hamze	NCLW
Abeer Sayrawan	Poultry Department -MOA
Maysaa Hamadeh	USAID- LIVCD programme
Alia Farhat	Al-Majmoua
Zeina Tamim	Pasture Department- MOA
Majida Mcheik	ICU focal point
Hussan Fakih	Regie President - Head of Tobbaco Farmes Association
Ali Moussawi	Head of Regie Office –Bekaa
Chantal Ghossein	Tobbaco Farmer
Doriss Abi Nassif	Organic Farmer and operator
Jackleen Jreissati	Organic Farmer and operator

Name	Function
Nawfa Jaafar	Head of Al-Amira AgroProcessing Coop
Saada Chiban	Head of Jdoudna Women Agroprocessing coop
Denise Faress	Olive producer and dairy product farmer
Pauline Eid	Plant Protection Department-MOA
Racha Chahine	Council of Development and Reconstruction – ESFD Deputy Director/job creation manager
Joseph Hanna	LEDA Bekaa
Daheg Mokdad	Head of Forestry and Fishery Services MOA
Elie Rouhana	Fishermen in Batroun- North Lebanon
Antoine Youness	Fishermen at Anfeh- North Lebanon

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NEAR EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA

The FAO Country Gender Assessment series provides updated insights, based on available sex-disaggregated data, on the main gender dimensions of the agriculture and rural sector by country. In alignment with the FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030, the Assessment describes women's and men's specific roles and opportunities in agriculture, and explores the impact of existing gender inequalities on both women's empowerment and rural development. Through a detailed analysis of the various sub-sectors, the policy framework and the main national stakeholders, it offers concrete recommendations to the government, FAO and other relevant partners for strengthening the integration of gender equality dimensions in agricultural and rural development policies and programmes.

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