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World Food
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Decentralized Evaluation

Evaluation Series on Emergency School Feeding in the Democratic Republic of Congo,
Lebanon, Niger and Syria

2015-2019

Lebanon Evaluation Report

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AUB	American University of Beirut
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBT	Cash-based Transfers
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Center for Educational Research and Development
CO	Country Office
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DOPS	Counselling and Guidance Office / <i>Direction d'Orientation Pédagogique et Scolaire</i>
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRI	Dietary Reference Intakes
EMOP	Emergency Operations
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ESF	Emergency School Feeding
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFA	Food for Assets
FFT	Food for Training
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FL&W	Food Loss and Waste
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HEEU	Health and Environment Education Unit
IOCC	International Orthodox Christian Charities
LAU	Lebanese American University
LBP	Lebanese Pound
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MT	Metric Tones
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Programme
OCHA	United-Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCM	Presidency of the Council of Ministers
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations
PRS	Palestinian Refugees from Syria
PTA	Parent Teachers Associations
RACE	Reaching all Children with Education
SBP	School-based Programmes Unit
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SF	School Feeding
SFP	School Feeding Programme
SGBV	Sexual and Gender based violence
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.
USD	United States Dollars
VASyR	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

The Evaluation of Emergency School Feeding (ESF) Activities in Lebanon from 2016 until 2019 is part of a four-country¹ Evaluation Series on ESF commissioned by WFP School-based Programmes Unit (SBP) and made possible by a multi-year Canadian contribution to WFP. The evaluation provides accountability to Canada and other donors contributing to WFP ESF in the four countries, as well as to the wider humanitarian community. It also promotes learning at the strategic and operational levels, both globally and in-country. Findings from the individual country evaluations feed into a synthesis of lessons learned on ESF that will be presented in a separate synthesis report.

The evaluation series has been timed to inform the implementation of a new 10-year school feeding strategy for WFP. The strategy covers school feeding in development contexts as well as in emergency and fragile contexts. Expected users of the Lebanon evaluation report are WFP Country Office (CO) staff, the Regional Bureau (RB) in Cairo, and at headquarters (HQ). The report is also likely to be of interest to other partners and donors. In Lebanon these include partners that work closely with WFP on school feeding and related fields, including the Government of Lebanon and the regular school feeding donor countries—Canada and Italy. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) may draw on and use the evaluation to inform the development of a national school feeding policy framework. Other possible interested parties include the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and other organizations working in education, food security and school feeding.

Overview of evaluation subject

WFP's School Feeding Programme (SFP) in Lebanon started in public schools as a pilot programme in 2016, following a

request from MEHE to WFP. Initially introduced as a pilot intervention in 13 public schools reaching 16,610 school children, it has expanded in 2019–2020 to reach 59 schools with 14,503 Lebanese children and 20,027 Syrian refugees² children, reaching a total of 34,530 children between ages 5–18 years, with a gender disparity of approximately 50 percent.

The school feeding programme in Lebanon pursues various direct and indirect objectives, including food security, nutrition diversity and awareness, access to education, alleviation of short-term hunger, social cohesion, gender-sensitive protection concern, support for local inclusive economic development.

WFP's school feeding interventions in Lebanon have three interlinked components supporting: a) the provision of a healthy school snack, b) the development of nutrition education tools, and c) summer nutrition camps. These components have been complemented with technical assistance to MEHE to support the Government of Lebanon's goal of developing a national school feeding programme.

Over the evaluation period, WFP has carried out school feeding interventions under the following three operations:

- The Emergency Operation (EMOP) 200433 (June 2012–December 2016)
- The Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200987 (November 2016–December 2017)
- The Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2018–2021 (January 2018–December 2021) with an annual average budget for school feeding of USD 4.1 million.

Theory of Change of school feeding

In 2016, and at the request of MEHE, WFP launched a pilot ESF programme as part of its support to Lebanon reaching Sustainable Development Goal 2 on Zero Hunger. This school feeding programme was provided to Lebanese and Syrian refugee children residing in vulnerable communities across Lebanon's eight governorates. The school feeding programme considered the challenge of the

¹ Niger, DRC, Lebanon, Syria

² The evaluation follows the UN wording of 'Syrian Refugees' when referring to the Syrian population in

Lebanon. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 uses the terminology of 'Displaced Syrians'

double burden of malnutrition in Lebanon. A daily snack pack (fruit, protein and dairy) was provided as an incentive to improve children's school enrolment, attendance and retention. The programme also included a nutrition education component to encourage children to make healthy choices, highlighting the essential role of school feeding in shaping future eating habits. It was also expected to support local economic opportunities and women's economic empowerment. Improved social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian refugee children and parents was seen as a possible added benefit. WFP was committed to the local procurement of school snack components to support the recovery of the local agricultural sector.

According to the Theory of Change (ToC), for these objectives and impacts to be achieved, WFP's school feeding interventions needed to work in tandem with the complementary efforts of other international humanitarian actors that address additional barriers to accessing education for vulnerable children.

Country context

Lebanon is a densely populated country of approximately 6.82 million comprising 4.6 million Lebanese nationals and over 2 million refugees (mainly Syrian and Palestinian) and migrants. The World Hunger Index reports Lebanon as having a moderate level of hunger among the Lebanese population – 11.6 in 2019 compared to 8.0 in 2010. According to the 2019 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR), roughly 29 percent of Syrian refugee households remain moderately to severely food insecure³. About half of Syrian refugee households live in extreme poverty (USD 87 per month) and 73.5 percent live below the poverty line of less than USD 3.8 per day. The protracted nature of the Syrian refugee crisis and the high demand for schooling has strained the quality, availability, and access to education for Lebanese children and registered refugee children.

While undernourishment in Lebanon stands at 11 percent, the national

population is shifting away from a micronutrient-rich diet towards a diet high in calories, sugar, and fat. From a nutritional standpoint, Lebanon shows signs of a 'double-burden of malnutrition', the co-existence of under-nutrition and over-nutrition.

Methodology

The development of the thematic scope for this evaluation was coordinated with the three other country evaluation teams. Scoping was guided by a global evaluation matrix that represents the common framework for data collection and analysis for all evaluations in this series. The global matrix was then adapted resulting in a Lebanon-specific evaluation matrix. Data collection was based on a mixed-method approach. A compilation of secondary data from WFP and its partners provided an overview of the scope and scale of the school feeding activities and the context. The evaluation was supported by strong primary data collection through a quantitative and qualitative survey carried out by the Center for Research on Population and Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut (AUB).

Key findings

EQ 1 – Appropriateness of school feeding to the needs

The school feeding design responded to the differing needs of both Lebanese and Syrian refugee children while recognizing the distinctions and similarities between both population groups. This enabled an approach where combining diet diversity, food security and nutrition education measures addressed short-term hunger and nutrition outcomes.

Targeting criteria emphasized reaching communities with a high concentration of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee families. The weighting of gender-specific vulnerability or protection concerns was less evident when selecting the intervention schools in the eight governorates. Similarly, it was not always clear that the selection of areas within each governorate was

³ The poverty and hunger situation are also increasing quickly due to the current economic crisis and the impact of the Covid pandemic.

underpinned by a solid analysis of where the most vulnerable communities were located within the governorate.

EQ 2 – Coherence of ESF with humanitarian response

In line with WFP's humanitarian principles, MEHE officials at national level and school staff were fully engaged with the design and implementation of the school feeding programme. Nutrition education activities initiated by WFP has been incorporated into the national curriculum and is mainstreamed in all schools by MEHE. Access to education requires the complementary efforts of multiple partners to address gender and age-specific barriers for both Lebanese and Syrian children. Coordination of educational efforts and sharing of information took place in the education sector working group attended by WFP. However, direct synergies or targeted complementary actions between school feeding and other interventions implemented by other UN agencies and NGOs were limited. To address these, WFP took steps to coordinate all sectoral activities within one school.

EQ 3 – SF results in education, food security and nutrition

The school snack has had an impact on children's food insecurity and dietary habits. The AUB study noted a significant decrease in child reported food insecurity experience among children attending afternoon school shifts. For those children attending afternoon school shifts, the snack increased diet diversity and also filled an essential gap in the variety of food not otherwise available to them. In the morning school shifts - where the majority of students are Lebanese - the snack changed the dietary diversity of the food consumed by children. The distribution of the school snack during recess was vital to alleviating short-term hunger. Children attending intervention schools demonstrated an increase in nutrition-related knowledge and had better informed attitudes towards healthy eating compared to children attending control schools. The availability of school snacks had a positive effect on attendance and retention and were considered as an incentive for enrolment.

EQ 4 – SF results for households and local economies

The school snack gave only a very limited financial incentive for poor families to enrol their children. While school feeding did have an impact on the food security and nutrition of the children, there was no conclusive evidence that it had a direct effect on negative coping strategies.

All snack components were procured locally. It was found that WFP's quality standards for fruit were high and that not all small holding farmers were able to meet those standards. In Lebanon only 240 suppliers of agricultural produce were potentially available to participate in the pilot and of these only 10 percent met WFP standards. Syrian and Lebanese women worked for the local supplier.

EQ 5 – Additional effects

School feeding instilled a feeling of equality between students attending the morning or afternoon shifts. However, it was not evident that the school snack contributed to social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian children. In the nutrition summer camps it was found that social cohesion did not happen automatically and that concerted efforts to bring together population groups from different nationalities or socio-economic backgrounds was required. It was noted that school feeding had an impact on school engagement among the Lebanese children and this was less so among Syrian children.

There was no evidence that the school snack reduced the incidence of child labour or early marriage. The opportunity benefit of a snack was not a factor in a family's decision to send their child to school. The fiscal or nutritional value of a school snack was not comparable to the income a child could earn working or was not a factor in a family's decision to have their child married.

EQ 6 – Sustainability and connectedness of school feeding

A link between a national school feeding programme and the wider national social protection system and strategy is not yet evident, largely because a nation-wide, gender-responsive social protection system is at a nascent stage.

Strong commitments were found within MEHE to developing a nation-wide school feeding programme and the current institutional set up allows for strong national ownership.

Financing strategies beyond regular government budgets will be necessary to address concerns around financial capacity, especially given the current economic and social crisis.

Overall conclusions

C1: In keeping with the ToC, school feeding in Lebanon via provision of a school snack has contributed to improved diet diversity, reduced food insecurity and short-term hunger for both Lebanese and Syrian children.

C2: Provision of a school snack is directly linked to improved food security and nutrition as well as school attendance and retention. It was an incentive for enrolment mainly for the afternoon shift.

C3: Intervention schools are located in vulnerable areas across Lebanon. The absence of a more detailed situation analysis made it difficult to assess whether the intervention schools were located in pockets with a high concentration of gender-specific protection concerns.

C4: There was limited evidence of impact on social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian children but the school snack distribution was perceived to instil a feeling of equality between children in the morning and afternoon school shifts.

C5: Nutrition and health education in schools and summer nutrition camps resulted in behavioural change with respect to making healthy choices for food intake.

C6: The development of a national framework and policy for school feeding is needed for the programme to be scaled up and to bring clarity around objectives and modalities.

C7: The provision of a school snack had minimal effect on local economic development and women's economic empowerment but school feeding has created a good foundation to enable more local inclusive economic development.

Recommendations

R1: Review the geographic and school-specific targeting of school feeding to reach the most vulnerable communities within Lebanon's eight governorates based on a mandatory situation analysis.

R2: Increase nutritional variety and consider additional options to expand reach through different modalities.

R3: School feeding implementation guidelines should be further monitored at school level to ensure maximum effects.

R4: Be clear about the objectives of school feeding in a national school feeding framework and the link with the development of a national social safety net.

R5: Maintain nutrition education as a modality under the school feeding programme to address the double-burden of malnutrition.

R6: Consider developing an area-based approach for school feeding to link with local economic opportunities and support women economic empowerment.

R7: Revise the ToC to be more reflective of the size and scope of the programme.

1 Introduction

1. This Evaluation of Emergency School Feeding (ESF) in Lebanon is part of the four-country Evaluation Series on ESF that has been commissioned by the WFP School-based Programmes Unit (SBP). The series of evaluations of ESF activities was made possible by a multi-year Canadian financial contribution to WFP to support school feeding in emergencies and corresponding evaluation work in Lebanon, as well as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Niger and Syria. The multi-year contribution provides a unique opportunity for WFP to invest in the quality of ESF programming while at the same time generating evidence that has significance for WFP beyond these four countries.

2. The ESF evaluation series as a whole serves the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning:

- **Accountability** – The series assesses the results of WFP ESF activities funded by Global Affairs Canada and other donors and attributes accountability for interventions within each of the four countries, as well as to the wider humanitarian community.
- **Learning** – The evaluation of this series helps WFP to formulate programmatic considerations for the design and implementation of ESF programmes, identify possible improvements, and derive good practices and lessons to inform operational strategic decision-making. The findings are intended for active dissemination within WFP and relevant external stakeholders and networks to foster learning.

3. The launch of the evaluation series has been timed to allow it to inform the implementation of the new **10-year school feeding strategy of WFP**, which aims to cover both school feeding in development contexts as well as in emergency and fragile contexts. With its development, WFP is considering new areas of focus for its school feeding portfolio, namely girls' education (including adolescent girls) and the "humanitarian-development-peace" nexus⁴, two thematic areas which are also covered by the scope of the evaluations in this series.

4. As stipulated in the **Terms of Reference (ToR) for the ESF Evaluation Series**, the final report of Lebanon ESF evaluation should:

- Document best practices and generate evidence about ESF programming
- Generate context-specific recommendations for ESF/School Feeding (SF) programming.

5. **Among the users of this evaluation report will be WFP management and technical staff involved** in ESF/SF programming in Lebanon, the Regional Bureau (RB) in Cairo and the Rome headquarters (HQ). It is expected that the evaluation will also be of **interest to other partners and donors** that provide support to ESF/SF. In Lebanon this includes:

- Partners that work closely with WFP on school feeding, particularly the Government of Canada
- National level partners including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) who may draw on the evaluation to inform the national policy framework on school feeding
- Social protection experts and other actors supporting education, nutrition, food security, peace/conflict, and protection
- WFP's implementing partners such as the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).

1.1 Overview of the evaluation subject

6. School snack distribution was introduced by WFP in March 2016, following a **request from MEHE** as part of a regional response to the Syrian crisis. WFP Lebanon's annual average

⁴ Also referred to as the "triple nexus".

budget for school feeding is **USD 4.1 million under the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2018-2021**. School feeding support was provided under the following WFP programmes: (see Annex 2 Timeline WFP Operations Lebanon):

- The WFP Emergency Operation (EMOP 200433 'Food Assistance to Vulnerable Syrian Populations in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey Affected by the Events in Syria'), approved in June 2012 with an implementation period until December 2016.
- The WFP Regional Programme (PRRO 200987 'Assistance to Vulnerable Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey'), approved in November 2016 with implementation until the end of 2017.
- WFP CSP covering the period 2018 – 2021 with ESF included under Strategic Outcome 1: Food-insecure refugees—including school-age children—and crisis affected host population have access to lifesaving, nutritious and affordable food throughout the year. With the following output: targeted schoolchildren 5-14 years receive cash or school snacks conditional on their enrolment and retention in school.

7. The ESF programme in Lebanon has **three interlinked components**:

- The provision of a healthy school snack
- Development of nutrition education tools
- Summer nutrition camps

8. The following modalities have been implemented to support the **school snack component**:

- Provision of a snack to Syrian and Lebanese students in AM and PM shifts (under EMOP 200433; PRRO 200987, CSP 2018-2021).
- Delivery of a 'Cash for Education' (Minlla) model starting October 2016 targeting 50,000 Syrian children in public schools in Akkar and Mount Lebanon in partnership with UNICEF and MEHE (under EMOP 200433; PRRO 200987). WFP provided a monthly cash grant of USD 6 to each Syrian child enrolled in second shift public schools. The programme was discontinued following an evaluation in 2018⁵.
- Introduction of a pilot intervention of school kitchens providing cold snacks (introduced under the CSP 2018–2020) as of the 2019/2020 school year. The number of planned school kitchens during the pilot phase is six, spread across all governorates.⁶ (See Annex 3.)

9. The complementary **nutrition education component** was initially provided directly to school children by WFP's implementing partner in collaboration with MEHE. It was replaced in 2018 with the development of nutrition education tools which are integrated into the overall school health extra-curricular activities and are delivered by school health educators.⁷ This component is now part of the school health programme that MEHE is implementing in all public schools through the Health and Environment Education Unit (HEEU) at the Counselling and Guidance Office (DOPS).

10. **The summer nutrition camps component** was launched by WFP in 2017 to act as an additional platform to reach youth and improve their knowledge of health, including nutrition, psycho-social issues, and sexual and reproductive health. Implemented by IOCC, the camps aim to spread nutrition awareness and improve students' eating habits while contributing to the enhancement of social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian refugee students. This component was funded through Danish contributions in 2019. During 2017 and 2018 the summer camps were supported by Italian and Canadian funds.

⁵ The Minlla programme was discontinued following a decision from MEHE. This decision was based on the impact evaluation finding that the Minlla programme – after one year of programme delivery – did not find positive impacts on attendance and enrolment. The impact evaluation did not find any impacts on the food consumption and economic well-being at the household level as a result of the programme. ('Min Ila' Cash Transfer Program for Displaced Syrian Children in Lebanon (UNICEF and WFP). Impact Evaluation Report Endline. UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti; AIR American Institutes for Research. June 2018.

⁶ Because of school closures only 3 kitchens became fully operational in SY 2019-2020.

⁷ WFP, 2018. School snacks process report.

11. ESF was launched in March 2016, initially in 13 public schools, as an intervention supporting educational outcomes. **MEHE, which governs Lebanon's education system, is WFP's government counterpart.** The Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) reports directly to MEHE which acts as a custodial authority. There are two departments within the MEHE-General Directorate of Education with whom WFP coordinates its school feeding interventions:

- The Counselling and Guidance Office (DOPS) – Counselling and Guidance (with a broader responsibility within the education sector and emphasis on education assistance to Lebanese children and promoting students' health by implementing and monitoring the school health programme).
- Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) Project Management Unit set up to provide additional expertise in programme implementation, oversight, and monitoring to meet the acute and immediate education needs of Syrian refugee children.

12. WFP's ESF programme reached the following numbers of students:

Table 1 Data on number of children reached with school snack distribution (Source WFP reporting)

School Year	No of schools	Target	Students reached	Lebanese children reached in morning shift ⁸	Refugee children reached in afternoon shift
2016/2017	13	10,000	16,610	6,644 (50% boys, 50% girls)	9,966 (50% boys, 50% girls)
2017/2018	39	17,000	17,456	8,798 (45% boys, 55% girls)	8,658 (54% boys, 46% girls)
0–59 months ⁹			2,864	1,078	1,786
6–11 years			11,296	5,602	5,694
12–18 years			3,296	2,118	1,178
2018/2019	39	24,000	23,170	9,116 (53% boys, 48% girls)	14,072 (50% boys, 50% girls)
0–59 months			3,696	1,310	2,386
6–11 years			15,989	5,618	10,371
12–18 years			3,503	2,188	1,315
2019/2020	59	36,500 ¹⁰	34,530	Target 50% boys, 50% girls	Target 52% boys, 49% girls
0–59 months			5,897	2,477	3,420
6–11 years			23,398	9,827	13,571
12–18 years			5,235	2,199	3,036

1.2 Theory of Change

13. In 2016, WFP launched a pilot ESF programme as part of its support to Lebanon in reaching Sustainable Development Goal 2 on Zero Hunger. This ESF is provided to Lebanese and Syrian refugee children residing in vulnerable communities across all governorates¹¹. The school feeding programme in Lebanon considers the challenge of the double burden of malnutrition (undernutrition and obesity) in Lebanon^{12,13}. A daily snack pack (fruit, protein and dairy) is provided which aims to act as an incentive to improve children's school enrolment, attendance, and academic retention. It additionally includes a nutrition education component that encourages children to make healthy choices, highlighting the essential role of school

⁸ In some schools the morning shift will also include displaced Syrian children, up to 30% in some schools.

⁹ 5-year-old schoolchildren are included in the 0-59 months age category.

¹⁰ 34,000 packed snacks + 2,500 kitchen prepared snacks

¹¹ WFP Launches School Meals Programme to Support Both Lebanese And Syrian Children. 2016; <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-launches-school-meals-programme-support-both-lebanese-and-syrian-children>.

¹² Alice Burrell AS. The potential for School Feeding to improve the nutrition and health of adolescents in the MENA/ CIS region. WFP June 2016.

¹³ WFP, "The cost of the double burden of malnutrition". April 2017.

feeding in shaping future eating habits¹⁴. It was also expected that school feeding would support local economic opportunities, women's economic empowerment and improved social cohesion among Lebanese and Syrian refugee children and parents as a possible added benefit.

14. Alongside the direct support of school children, WFP aims to provide technical assistance to MEHE in developing a national framework for school feeding, with the ultimate goal of helping the Government of Lebanon to develop its own national school feeding programme. In addition, WFP committed to the local procurement of food for school snacks to support the recovery of the local agricultural sector.

15. **Outcome pathways of the ToC:**

- **Attendance and retention in education:** The provision of ESF is considered to contribute to increased attendance, enrolment, and retention. Better nutrition and the alleviation of short-term hunger are expected to positively affect children's attention in the classroom and lead to better education results. These positive changes will improve psycho-emotional wellbeing among children.
- **Nutrition intake:** ESF aims to support increased calorie and micronutrient consumption to improve the nutritional intake amongst vulnerable children. This is done through the provision of fruit, protein and dairy in the daily snack. These foods help to alleviate short-term hunger and help with children's ability to concentrate during lesson time.
- **Nutrition education:** A lack of nutrition awareness is a problem faced by both Syrian and Lebanese children and their families. Through nutrition education children are encouraged to make healthy choices, which will contribute to improved food security and nutrient intake. Summer nutrition camps are a rare occasion for children from both population groups to follow a joint programme. Through joint learning and play it is anticipated that the tensions between both groups are reduced.
- **Capacity building:** ESF is expected to contribute to a realisation among Government institutions that they cannot ignore the detrimental effects of inequality and the absence of social protection mechanisms. WFP's technical assistance to MEHE – as part of ESF – is expected to contribute to the development of a nationally-owned, inclusive, sustainable school feeding safety net.
- **Local economy and employment:** The targeted public schools are located across all governorates¹⁵ in socio-economically vulnerable areas with low or stagnant economic development and with large displaced populations. Procuring inputs for the school meals from local agricultural producers will support socio-economically disadvantaged farmers, inject income into these vulnerable communities, and lower tensions between refugees and the local population. The introduction of the cold kitchens in early 2020 is expected to directly support women's economic empowerment.

16. According to the ToC, for these objectives and impacts to be achieved, WFP's ESF interventions need to work in concert with the complementary efforts of international humanitarian actors that similarly address barriers to school attainment. Human and material educational resources need to be in place to respond to educational demands. The quality and quantity of food provided must have sufficient value to act as an incentive for families to send and keep their children at school (opportunity cost).

17. The feasibility of WFP's school feeding activities hinges on a number of factors that are external to WFP's own operations. These have been captured in the ToC list of assumptions referenced in the diagram. (See visual presentation of ToC in Annex 4.)

1.3 Context

18. **Overall context:** Lebanon is located on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Lebanon is a densely populated country of approximately 6.82 million comprising 4.6 million

¹⁴ Cervato-Mancuso AM, Westphal MF, Araki EL, Bógus CM. School feeding programs' role in forming eating habits. *Revista Paulista de Pediatria*. 2013;31(3):324-330.

¹⁵ Governorates: Akkar, Baalbek-Hermel, Beirut, Beqaa, Mount Lebanon, Nabatieh, North, South.

Lebanese nationals and over 2 million refugees and migrants¹⁶. No official census has taken place in Lebanon since 1932 due to the sensitive balance between the country's religious groups¹⁷.

19. **Refugee presence:** At the end of 2019, Lebanon hosted 914,648 UNHCR registered Syrian refugees or 208,358 households¹⁸, 54 percent of whom are aged between 3 and 18. Eighteen percent of these households were headed by women¹⁹. Government and other sources estimate the number to be closer to 1.5 million Syrian refugees²⁰. Lebanon also hosts Palestine refugees estimated to be between 174,000²¹ and 450,000²², 27,248 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS)²³ registered with UNRWA, and an estimated 18,200 refugees from Iraq and elsewhere.²⁴

20. **Humanitarian context:** According to the 2019 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR), roughly 29 percent of Syrian refugee households remain moderately to severely food insecure. Three out of four refugees lack legal residency and the limited self-support opportunities, compounded by depletion of savings and assets, has led refugees resorting to negative coping strategies, including begging, protracted debt, child labour, prostitution and early marriage. About half of Syrian refugee households live in extreme poverty (USD 87 per month) and 73.5 percent live below the poverty line of less than USD 3.8 per day²⁵. About 1.4 million children under 18 years of age are at risk and have an acute need for basic services²⁶.

21. The presence of an estimated 1.5 million displaced Syrians²⁷ has placed **increased demands on infrastructure and basic services**. Local structures are not adequately equipped to respond effectively. While the international donor community has provided extensive financial support to the government, the humanitarian situation remains precarious at a time when funding of responses and appeals is declining²⁸.

22. **To address the increasing poverty among Lebanese communities and, in particular, tensions in refugee hosting communities**, the exclusive targeting of refugees for international assistance was replaced by the more equitable targeting of both vulnerable refugee and host community population groups and is reflected in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017-2020.

23. **Food and nutrition security:** The World Hunger Index reports Lebanon as having a moderate level of hunger among the Lebanese population – 11.6 in 2019 compared to 8.0 in 2010. For the Syrian Refugee population, the number of moderately to severely food insecure households declined from 34 percent to 28.9 percent between 2018 and 2019. However, the number of marginally food insecure Syrian refugee households increased from 57 percent to 64 percent with significant geographical disparities.²⁹ Some regions, such as Baalbek-Hermel, Akkar and Mount Lebanon have rates of moderate and severe food insecurity above 35 percent.³⁰

24. **The food insecurity of vulnerable families negatively impacts children and infant's nutrition.**³¹ In 2018 and 2019, only 17 percent of Syrian refugee children aged 6-23

¹⁶ World Bank. (2018). Retrieved 2020, from World Bank Open Data: <https://data.worldbank.org/>

¹⁷ World population review. (2020). Lebanon population. In Lebanon the absence of adequate and up to date demographic and poverty data makes demographic analysis and targeting a challenge.

¹⁸ UNHCR. (2020). Retrieved 2020, from Operational Portal Refugee Situations.

¹⁹ UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019). Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.

²⁰ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2019 March Statistical Dashboard.

²¹ Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (2017).

²² UNRWA (2018). Retrieved 2020, from Registration data:

https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_in_figures_2018_eng_v1_8_1_2019_final.pdf.

²³ UNRWA, Lebanon: UNRWA Humanitarian Snapshot, November & December.

²⁴ UNHCR (2018). Vulnerability assesment of refugees of other nationalities in Lebanon.

²⁵ Habib RR., Survey on Child Labour in Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees, 2019.

²⁶ Government of Lebanon, UN RC/HC Lebanon. (2019 update). Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020.

²⁷ UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019), Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.

²⁸ OCHA FTS website, February 1st, 2020.

²⁹ Idem.

³⁰ Government of Lebanon, UN RC/HC Lebanon (2019 update), Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020.

³¹ Idem.

months received diverse diets of four or more food groups. The number of meals consumed by children had decreased, especially in Baalbek-Hermel and the South.³²

25. While **undernourishment** in Lebanon stands at 11 percent,³³ the population is shifting away from a micronutrient-rich diet towards a diet that is high in calories, sugar, and fat.³⁴ From a nutritional standpoint, Lebanon shows signs of a “double-burden of malnutrition”³⁵, the co-existence of under-nutrition and over-nutrition.

26. **Basic education:** The Lebanese education system consists of public and private schools. Currently, only 30 percent of school-age Lebanese children attend public school (approximately 200,000 students from the socio-economically vulnerable population). In Lebanon, 54.3 percent of women; and 55.6 percent of men have some secondary education.³⁶

27. **The protracted nature of the refugee crisis and the high demand for schooling has strained the quality, availability and access to education for Lebanese children and registered refugee children.** In 2016, Lebanon ranked 108th in the educational attainment category, with 83 percent of girls enrolled in primary education, 65 percent in secondary education, and 46 percent in tertiary education.³⁷ In the 2017/2018 school year, 70 percent of children aged 6-14 were enrolled in school at a national level, with a notable regional disparity in enrolment.³⁸

28. **Gender:** In 1996, Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) but women’s personal and political freedom is restricted by laws and regulations, socio-cultural values and decision-making structures; public policies and development strategies; ongoing conflict and security problems; and a rise in social conservatism.³⁹ In 2020, Lebanon ranked 145th of 153 countries in the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report⁴⁰; 26.3 percent of women participate in the labour force compared with 76.3 percent of men. In the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Report for 2019, the Human Development Index (HDI) for females is 0.678 and 0.762 for males. The report notes a Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 0.362.⁴¹

29. **Access to education for refugee children:** MEHE has responded to the refugee crisis by working with partners in the education sector to develop an education response plan (RACE Strategy). Funded by various donor countries and the World Bank, RACE is a component of the ‘No Lost Generation’ initiative.⁴² With nearly 54 percent (or over 200,000) of school-aged children not attending school, increasing the enrolment of Syrian children remains a challenging priority. Out-of-school children mapping for 2018–19 indicated that transportation, child labour and schools being at full capacity are key barriers to education.⁴³ A large number of refugee children were accommodated within MEHE’s school system through creating two academic shifts: morning and afternoon for Lebanese and Syrian children respectively.

30. **A gender-responsive social protection system** is still at a nascent stage in Lebanon. The Lebanese social protection system is characterized by a multiplicity of social assistance and insurance programmes. These are mostly ad hoc and not applied universally and the informal sector is excluded from any kind of social insurance.⁴⁴ The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) are the two most important social protection measures that support poor Lebanese households.

³² UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019), Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. Pp. 79-83.

³³ FAO (2018), The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World.

³⁴ ESCWA (2016), Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in Lebanon.

³⁵ Aleyachetty R, Thomas G, Kengne AP, et al. The double burden of malnutrition among adolescents: analysis of data from the Global School-Based Student Health and Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children surveys in 57 low-and middle-income countries. *The American journal of clinical nutrition*. 2018;108(2):414-424.

³⁶ UNDP (2019), Human Development report.

³⁷ World Economic Forum. (2016), Global Gender Gap Report. Figures cover Lebanese and registered refugees.

³⁸ MoE - Republic of Lebanon (2018), Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon (R.A.C.E) Fact Sheet.

³⁹ K4D (2014), Gender equality and women’s empowerment in Lebanon.

⁴⁰ World Economic Forum (2020), Global Gender Gap Report.

⁴¹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LBN>

⁴² <http://racepmlebanon.com/index.php/features-mainmenu-47/race2-intro-article>.

⁴³ UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO (2019), Out of School Children Mapping and Profiling 18-19.

⁴⁴ Oxfam (2016), Poverty, Inequality and Social Protection in Lebanon.

31. **National economic and financial capacity:** As a result of unfavorable economic conditions, the sovereign debt burden is dangerously high and for the first time, Lebanon defaulted on its debts in March 2020. “At 150 percent of GDP, Lebanon’s debt has become unsustainable. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected government revenues to be at 21-23 percent of GDP, meaning that the cost of servicing the debt will absorb the totality of government revenues, leaving literally nothing for all other public services (...).”⁴⁵

32. **WFP Emergency Response:** WFP has been operating in Lebanon since 2012, responding to the needs of refugees – mainly from Syria – through regional operations EMOP 200433 and PRRO 200987. A regional approach for the emergency response to the Syrian refugee crisis transitioned into the development of Lebanon’s Strategic Plan, incorporating a humanitarian and resilience response with a national capacity building strategy. WFP engages actively in contributing to the strategic direction of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) and the LCRP.

33. **WFP’s CSP:** The CSP introduced capacity-strengthening support to enhance Lebanon’s capacity for managing future impact mainly through support for social safety nets, including a national framework for school feeding. The CSP focuses on four strategic outcomes to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis while continuing WFP’s strategic partnership with the Government of Lebanon to achieve SDGs 2 and 17.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology and Limitations

34. All evaluations in this series used a mixed-method, gender-sensitive and theory-driven approach. The starting point for the development of the evaluation methodology was the **reconstruction of a set of country-specific ToCs** that captured how the different components of school feeding in each country were thought to facilitate the different intended results, and what assumptions WFP had made regarding the influence of external factors on the feasibility of SF activities. **The Evaluation Team then developed a global version of the school feeding ToC that summarised the shared elements** of the four country-specific SF ToCs (see Figure 18 in Annex 8).

35. On the basis of this global ToC, the Evaluation Team developed a **global evaluation matrix** that **refined the evaluation questions for each of the evaluation criteria** that had been suggested in the ToR.⁴⁶ This matrix served as the **common framework for data collection and analysis for all four evaluations** in this series to ensure consistency. Each country team then adapted the global evaluation matrix to the specificities of school feeding activities in their country. The resulting **country-specific evaluation matrices guided data collection** in the different countries. The evaluation matrix for this evaluation of school feeding activities in Lebanon can be found in Annex 7 of this report. Table 8 in Annex 8 provides an overview of how the Evaluation Team has used the evaluation questions and sub-questions to respond to the evaluation criteria covered by this evaluation.

36. Table 2 lists the evaluation questions that were addressed in this evaluation and briefly explains the relevance of each question in the context of Lebanon. The evaluation matrix for the Lebanon school feeding evaluation can be found in Annex 7.

Table 2 Overview of evaluation questions and their relevance for Lebanon

EQ – To what extent...	Relevance for Lebanon Evaluation
EQ 1. ... is school feeding appropriate to address needs of boys, girls and adolescents in evolving crisis settings and contexts	The prolonged Syrian displacement continues to impact on deteriorating living conditions and vulnerability of the refugees. At the same time, Lebanon is dealing with a deepening economic and social crisis resulting in increased vulnerability and poverty in Lebanese communities. This question therefore examined if school

⁴⁵ Amer Bisat, L. C. (2020), Should Lebanon Default? Restructuring Is Inevitable: The Sooner, the Better.

⁴⁶ As required by the TOR, our evaluation team applied the evaluation criteria of appropriateness, coherence, effectiveness, impact (contribution), coverage and sustainability. While the TOR initially had also mentioned efficiency as an evaluation criterion, WFP decided to drop this criterion from the scope of the evaluation. Discussions took place between the Evaluation Manager and WFP staff at headquarters, the regional bureaus, country offices and the Evaluation Team when WFP stakeholders determined that questions related to the efficiency of SF were not among the key issues that this evaluation series should address.

EQ – To what extent... in Lebanon?	Relevance for Lebanon Evaluation
	feeding as an intervention type, is a good fit for the existing needs and challenges for both population groups and whether it has been able to integrate gender and equity issues in its response.
EQ 2: ...has school feeding been coherent with the humanitarian response of WFP and other actors in Lebanon?	WFP school feeding in Lebanon is limited in scale. This question assesses whether school feeding is complementing other assistance and is consistent with the overall humanitarian response. It also assesses whether WFP adhered to humanitarian principles of protection and accountability and whether school feeding has forged effective partnerships on the ground and allowed for making the bridge between addressing immediate needs and a longer-term developmental approach.
EQ 3: ... has school feeding as an emergency response supported education of girls & boys, and has contributed to their food and nutrition security in crises and emergency situations?	School feeding has been shown to be effective to promote educational and nutritional objectives and to contribute to greater food security in stable, developmental contexts. This question therefore goes to the heart of the issues that has led WFP to organize this evaluation series. It is examining the ways in which school feeding has performed under conditions of instability, and whether it was able to ensure both girls and boys, refugee and Lebanese children were able to be reached.
EQ 4: ... has school feeding in emergencies strengthened ability of households to cope with crises and (if applicable) helped to bolster local economies and markets?	Central to this evaluation question is whether school feeding has led to additional activities and effects mainly of an economic nature in the communities benefiting both population groups. The evaluation questions also assess whether school feeding could provide a boost for local agricultural production and for women's economic empowerment.
EQ 5. ... has school feeding as an emergency response had effects not yet foreseen in WFP's school feeding policy but important in crisis and emergency settings?	Little is known about possible additional benefits of school feeding for social cohesion and the psycho-social well-being of children affected by conflict and instability. This is particularly the case where conditions are characterised by a combination of acute and protracted displacement of populations, as in the Syrian refugee crisis. Answering this question for Lebanon is therefore meant to inform WFP if school feeding should be considered as an activity that can deliver benefits beyond education, nutrition and food security.
EQ 6. ...has school feeding as an emergency response been coupled with creating a sustainable system for school feeding, in line with priorities and capacities of the partner government?	This question examines to what extent the piloting of school feeding in Lebanese public schools and the technical assistance at institutional level have contributed to the development of national school feeding framework and policy. More broadly this question looks at to what extent the school feeding interventions have contributed to the wider debate in Lebanon on the development of national social safety nets.

37. Answers to the evaluation questions drew on secondary data and information that was compiled in collaboration with WFP country office and country-level stakeholders. Secondary data helped the evaluators to establish an overview of the SF activities, to understand the school feeding support provided and to learn about the operational and socio-economic context of school feeding activities (See Annex 9). Careful preparation of data collection tools, training of enumerators and interviewers and the high-level of methodological and data triangulation for the different evaluation questions allowed the team to maximize the reliability and validity of the collected data.

38. **This evaluation was supported by a strong primary data collection through a quantitative and qualitative study carried out by the Center for Research on Population and Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut (AUB).** The full research report is attached as Annex 1. The AUB research study adopted a mixed-methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, in addition to a strong emphasis on triangulation across the two. The study was conducted in 12 schools that implemented the ESF programme, and 12 matched control schools that did not implement the ESF programme.

a. **Qualitative data collection** in schools that implemented ESF, included interviews with 12 school principals and six focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents, teachers and school staff. The qualitative methods explored perceptions towards the ESF programme and its potential effects and investigated challenges in implementation.

b. A quasi-experimental component that collected **quantitative survey data from children** attending 10 ESF (intervention schools) and 10 non-ESF (control schools) to assess the difference in various nutritional and educational outcomes between intervention and control schools.

c. **School snack assessment:** The nutritional composition of the ESF snack was analysed to assess and evaluate its overall nutritional content. An average daily nutrient contribution provided by the snack was computed.

39. Table 3 below shows the number of interviews and FGDs that were carried out as part of qualitative data collection in addition to the number of schools in which quantitative data collection took place by region.

Table 3 *Distribution of qualitative and quantitative data collection across governorates*

Governorate	Qualitative			Quantitative Survey	
	School Principal Interviews	FGD with Teachers	FGD with Parents	Control Schools	Intervention Schools
Akkar/North	4	1	1	3	3
Bekaa/Baalbeck-EI Hermel	3	1	1	3	3
Mount Lebanon	3		1	2	2
South	2	1		2	2

40. **Qualitative school level data collection** involved interviews with school principals and FGDs with parents and school staff, including teachers, health coordinators and supervisors.

Table 4 *FGD location, gender division and nationality*

Governorate	FGD	Total number of participants	M	F	Nationality
Akkar/North	Parents	8	4	4	Syrian
Bekaa/ Baalbeck-EI Hermel	Parents	10	1	9	8 L-1 S
Mount Lebanon	Parents	11	2	9	Syrian
Akkar/North	School staff	5	1	4	Lebanese
Bekaa/ Baalbeck-EI Hermel	School staff	7	1	6	Lebanese
South	School staff	10	1	9	Lebanese

41. **Quantitative child level data collection.** In collaboration with MEHE, who provided a list of eligible schools, each of the 39 ESF intervention schools was matched to a non-programme control school based on predicted probability relative to specific school characteristics, i.e. size of the school, geographic location, school type (co-ed versus single sex schools), other interventions occurring in the schools, and whether the schools operated an afternoon session. The quasi-experimental study was designed to have a sample size large enough to detect small yet meaningful outcome effects between children attending intervention schools as compared to children attending control schools, including differences in diet diversity, food security, nutrition knowledge, school engagement, sense of community, self-esteem, school absenteeism and school performance outcomes.

42. **Nutrition focused summer camps evaluation by the Lebanese American University (LAU) carried out in 2019.** The evaluation also considered the findings of WFP's commissioned assessment of the nutrition summer camps, which are an integral part of WFP's

school feeding strategy in Lebanon.⁴⁷ For the methodology LAU undertook a quantitative survey with a sample size of 295 pre-test and post-test school children (172 girls, 58.3 percent; ages 9–16) covering 12 summer camps. The distribution of nationalities was as follows: 43.5 percent Lebanese, 41.7 percent Syrian, and 3.4 percent students from other non-specified nationalities.

43. **The AUB study was complemented by in-country consultations by two international experts.** The consultations focused on key informant interviews with WFP CO staff, MEHE, UN agencies, implementing partners and school principals. The initial in-country mission took place in October 2019 but had to be cut short due to social unrest. A repeat in-country mission took place in December 2019. (See Annex 10 for list of persons interviewed).

44. **Humanitarian Principles:** the evaluation was implemented in line with the four core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence⁴⁸ and with the principles of protection and accountability. All data collection and reporting protected the anonymity and safety of respondents. The inclusion of different groups of stakeholders in data collection ensured a balanced representation of views and allowed for data triangulation. The members of the evaluation team presented and introduced themselves consistently as independent from WFP’s own operations and structures.

45. **Gender:** The evaluation ensured that an equal number of girls and boys were surveyed and interviewed and that female enumerators were used. The evaluation ensured equal representation of women and girls during the stakeholders’ consultations, not just in numbers but also qualitatively. Special consideration was given in assessing how gender-sensitivity, gender-considerations and equity are understood and implemented.

1.4.1 Limitations and risks having affected the evaluation

46. Table 5 lists the risks and limitations that have affected the implementation of the SF evaluation in Lebanon.

Table 5 Risks, limitations and mitigation strategies for the SF evaluation in Lebanon

Risk / Limitation	Mitigation Strategy
No comprehensive baseline data available for the school feeding activities. For the AUB study absence of data from baseline (pre-distribution of snacks) in control and intervention schools was a limitation.	The evaluation used school surveys to collect data on school feeding results. Since no baseline data were available, the study was designed to match the intervention schools to control schools. This generated a counterfactual “closest match”, based on geographical distance, gender balance, and parental sociodemographic characteristics. In the qualitative component of the study, the team used “recall” of parents, and school staff to capture (perceived) changes in relevant measures over time. The team triangulated data with other data sources: Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR), UNICEF, UNHCR, civil society.
Primary data collection was delayed twice, due to unrest and Covid19 outbreak. Unable to complete data collection in two control schools and two intervention schools.	After the analysis of the survey data of the schools covered it was found that the data from the 10 schools were consistent in findings. Therefore, the data presented reflect the difference in outcomes between children attending 10 programme schools matched to 10 control schools.

⁴⁷ Assessment of the 2019 World Food Programme Nutrition and Health Summer Camps in Lebanon. Technical Report of the Lebanese American University, Beirut (2019).

⁴⁸ https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf.

2 Evaluation findings

2.1 Area 1: Design of the programme in Lebanon

2.1.1 EQ1: Appropriateness

EQ1 To what extent is school feeding appropriate to address the needs of boys, girls and adolescents in the evolving crisis settings and contexts in Lebanon?

Key findings

- The school feeding design responded to the differing needs of both the refugee and host community population groups while recognizing the differences and similarities in needs of both Lebanese and Syrian children. While acknowledging the differences between these two population groups, the programme was able to combine activities addressing short-term hunger and nutrition outcomes.
- The school feeding programme was aligned with the priorities of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) (2017–2020) prepared by the Government of Lebanon and the humanitarian community. School feeding reinforced the LCRP strategic objective of supporting services provision through national systems, namely strengthening the education services and learning environment with the aim of encouraging school retention rates and increasing nutrition for both boys and girls.
- Targeting criteria emphasized reaching governorates with a high concentration of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee communities. Less evident was whether gender-specific vulnerability or protection concerns were considered when selecting the locations of intervention schools within the governorates. There is no data or evidence to suggest that selection was based on location or schools having the highest concentration of poverty and vulnerability within the governorates.
- School feeding objectives and modalities were able to respond to the specific needs of both groups through an approach combining diet diversity, food security and nutrition education measures. In this way WFP was able to differentiate between the needs of Lebanese and Syrian children and to respond to the “double-burden of malnutrition”.
- MEHE’s engagement with the school feeding programme was evident in the nutritional education component where school health educators complemented the school snack distribution with nutrition awareness shifts in both morning and afternoon school shifts.
- While the school feeding programme did not benefit from a gender or protection analysis specifically linked to school feeding, it was found that, overall, the programme supported gender equity in its design and targeting.

2.1.1.1 Alignment with primary needs of target group

47. **The design of the school feeding programme was geared towards enhancing retention rates and nutritional outcomes.** The school feeding programme was designed in 2016 as an incentive to improve children’s access to, and retention in, Lebanese public schools, and to enhance overall educational outcomes by increasing each student’s ability to concentrate by reducing short-term hunger during school hours, as well as by improving nutritional outcomes via contributing towards dietary diversity. The retention rate is one of the main outcome indicators used to assess whether the school feeding programme is an effective intervention strategy⁴⁹. The retention rate has been high since the start of the programme in the SF intervention schools. In the 2016 EMOP 20043 report it was stated that the “*retention rate exceeded the target, as teachers reported school meals helped keep children in school and prevented drop-outs*”. Similar positive retention results are reported in WFP’s annual country reports of 2018 and 2019. The average retention rate for the 2018–2019 school year was 96.7 percent; 99.7 percent for students attending the morning shift and 93,7 for students attending the afternoon shift.

⁴⁹ WFP 2019 Indicator Compendium 2017-2021, pp. 69-82

48. **The feeding programme was established to support the government’s response to the effects of the Syrian humanitarian crisis and to develop a national school feeding framework.** School feeding was introduced at the request of MEHE. In addition to responding to the effects of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon’s public schools, the school feeding pilot programme has also contributed to the development of a national school feeding framework. The design and implementation were achieved through close collaboration with MEHE/DOPS, the MEHE department which is WFP’s counterpart for the national school feeding programme. Consultations between WFP and MEHE RACE/PMU took place for the implementation of the interventions in the afternoon shifts.

49. **A multitude of social, economic, cultural and institutional barriers are putting students at risk of dropping out and joining the ranks of those already out of school.** These barriers are related to enrolment policies, education quality, the social and economic conditions of Syrian refugees displaced in Lebanon and the attitudes of students’ parents towards education. These barriers required a multi-layered response by various actors. WFP school feeding activities in Lebanon are geared to enhancing nutrition, food security and educational outcomes, which is a valid rationale given poor nutritional indicators and high non-enrolment in schools among refugee populations⁵⁰.

50. **The nutrition objective responded to Lebanon’s “double-burden of malnutrition”.** At one end of the spectrum, evidence points to an overall increase in prevalence of children being overweight and the adoption of unfavourable eating patterns among Lebanese children.⁵¹ At the other end of the spectrum, Syrian refugee children are experiencing high levels of food insecurity along with low diet diversity. These conditions are overlain by an already fragile socioeconomic and political setting with limited resources to accommodate demanding needs.⁵²

51. **Since the initiation of the pilot programme in 2016, the school feeding approach and modalities have been adjusted to respond to nutritional needs.** The composition of the snack was adjusted to improve its nutritional value and respond to the introduction of school kitchens to increase variety. The timing of snack distribution was adjusted to take place during recess to address cognitive performance and short-term hunger. Other school feeding programmes provided in the non-formal education settings offer the meals and snacks prior to the start of the classes because children arrived at school without breakfast or lunch.

52. **For the Lebanese student population school feeding addressed some concerns identified in WHO’s Global School-Based Student Health Survey – 2017.** WFP’s school feeding interventions—as described in the ToC—aimed to respond to concerns identified in the WHO survey: the need for diet diversity, healthy eating habits and better cohesion between peers.

⁵⁰ Study on out-of-school children in Lebanon. Table 10 – Refugees in Lebanon: enrolment and non-enrolment in school. Syrian children aged 6 to 17 (2017).

⁵¹ TheirWorld. Schools Snack Programme Pilot - Lebanon Promoting improved education and nutrition outcomes for disadvantaged Lebanese and Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon.

⁵² Nasreddine L, Hwalla N, Saliba A, Akl C, Naja F. Prevalence and correlates of preschool overweight and obesity amidst the nutrition transition: findings from a national cross-sectional study in Lebanon. *Nutrients*. 2017;9(3):266.

Table 6 WHO⁵³ Global School-Based Student Health Survey – Lebanon data

	Students Aged 13–17 Years		
	Total	Males	Female
Dietary Behaviours			
Percentage of students who were underweight	4.0	5.0	3.1
Percentage of students who were overweight	24.6	30.2	19.7
Percentage of students who were obese	5.9	7.6	4.4
Percentage of students who usually drank carbonated soft drinks one or more times per day during the 30 days before the survey	47.7	54.4	41.9
Protective Factors			
Percentage of students who missed classes or school without permission on one or more days during the 30 days before survey	16.7	20.9	15.2
Violence and Unintentional Injury			
Percentage of students who were in a physical fight one or more times during the 12 months before the survey	38.7	55.2	24.0
Percentage of students who were bullied on one or more days during the 30 days before the survey	16.6	21.0	12.9

53. **Poverty and vulnerability weigh heavily on families' decisions to send children to school.** 69 percent of Syrian children aged 6 to 14 years old are enrolled at school and 22 percent of Syrian children between 5 and 14 years old⁵⁴. The Syrian children that are not in school are so food insecure that they cannot afford to go to school and need to work. For many Syrian families the opportunity cost weighs heavily on families balancing the value of learning when there is not chance to work.⁵⁵

54. **Food security and insecurity levels differed between Syrian and Lebanese students.** Child-reported food insecurity experience did not differ significantly between Lebanese children attending control (32 percent food insecure) and intervention schools (30 percent food insecure). These figures are higher among the Syrian students who attend the afternoon shift only. 57 percent of the Syrian students attending control schools reported to be food insecure compared with 43 percent attending intervention schools⁵⁶. This data should be carefully followed during the coming months as the financial crisis may further impact food security levels of vulnerable households and their children.

55. **Geographical targeting was based on locations with a high proportion of vulnerable refugee and Lebanese communities.** Other criteria included: Two-shift schools (with exceptions made for schools in very vulnerable areas or located close to the border); Distribution of food insecure (moderate and severe) households by governorate using VASyR data; Location of Syrian refugees based on OCHA's vulnerability map of 2015; Schools rehabilitated with WASH facilities, which are supported with health education and with a preference for the same principals and health educators for morning and afternoon shifts. The final list of selected schools was compiled by DOPS, approved by the Director General and communicated to WFP.

2.1.1.2 Complementary services

56. **All schools benefitted from the presence of a health educator as part of the MEHE's school health programme.** The health educator was reported to have an important role in monitoring the quality of food sold at the school shop, implementing the "School Health" programme which included health and nutritional awareness shifts in class and checking students' health records. In school feeding intervention schools, they assisted in snack distribution when needed.

⁵³ World Health Organization

⁵⁴ VASyR 2019.

⁵⁵ The opportunity cost was raised by all international humanitarian actors during in-country consultations.

⁵⁶ See AUB Study Report – Annex 1. Food insecurity levels are provided for children attending the morning shift and the afternoon shift. These figures also compared food insecurity levels in control schools and intervention schools.

57. **A significant nutritional education component included in the design contributed to a higher awareness of the importance of healthy food in ESF intervention schools in both morning and afternoon shifts.** School directors and teachers in FGDs reported that the awareness shifts - conducted by the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) staff and health educators - improved children's awareness of the importance of healthy food, especially milk.⁵⁷

2.1.1.3 Gender & equity and protection

58. **A general gender, equity and protection analysis supported the school feeding programme in the selection of the areas for the school feeding intervention schools.** An analysis tailored to school feeding allowing for prioritization did not take place. This would have enabled a more in-depth consideration of the following elements:

- Protection—reaching areas with a high occurrence of early marriage or child labour
- Gender—higher drop-out rates among girls, early marriage, and child labour
- Equity—considering the needs of both Lebanese and Syrian communities

59. **Design, monitoring and reporting included disaggregation by gender. In WFP's dialogue with MEHE and other stakeholders, WFP placed an emphasis on the importance of gender parity in the selection of intervention schools.** This dialogue has resulted in a gender balance among children reached in the intervention schools. Gender equity was considered during the school feeding scoping mission in 2015 and has remained a focus throughout the implementation. Gender disaggregated results data were presented in progress reports and annual completion reports. The documentation did not highlight specific gender analyses beyond gender disaggregated targets for output and outcome indicators.

60. **Country Office Gender Action Plan:** The 2017 Gender Action Plan emphasized the principles for food assistance to be adapted to different needs, and the respect for the dignity, safety and integrity of women, men, boys and girls.⁵⁸ The 2017 version of the gender plan referenced the Cash-for-Education component (which is no longer implemented) but no reference was made specifically to the school snack component. However, it was evident that the presence of the country-wide Gender Action Plan did effect gender mainstreaming in the school feeding programme. This was reflected in the targeting and reporting through gender-disaggregated data and introducing gender-sensitive nutrition advice.

2.1.2 EQ2: Coherence

EQ2: To what extent has school feeding been coherent with the overall humanitarian response of WFP and other actors?

Key findings

- WFP adhered to the principles of humanitarian assistance in its targeting of ESF beneficiaries under the school feeding pilot programme. The selection of the intervention schools was based on set targeting criteria including vulnerable areas, food insecurity, poverty, gender, reaching both displaced Syrians and Lebanese students.
- In line with WFP's humanitarian principles on participation, MEHE officials at national level, school directors, health educators, and teachers were involved in the original planning and ongoing implementation of the school feeding interventions.
- Accountability processes were developed to allow for feedback from parents and teachers. In some instances, feedback was not sufficiently streamlined or understood by stakeholders. Some complaints were handled at the school level, some child protection concerns were handled by MEHE child protection channels (hotline or email), and WFP's Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) unit handled protection concerns during summer camps when schools are not in session. Feedback from children was obtained on their preferences and views on the snack composition.

⁵⁷ AUB Study report pp. 28 – 29.

⁵⁸ Lebanon CO 2017 Gender Action Plan

- While programme documents did not reference the coordination and complementarity between school feeding and other programme interventions such as Food for Assets (FFA) and Cash Based Transfers (CBT), the implementation of ESF did benefit from working closely with other units such as Supply Chain, Procurement and AAP.
- School feeding was “complemented” with other services such as nutrition education and child health services under the government’s school health policy. Complementarity with other humanitarian actors was coordinated through the education sector working group.
- WFP took steps to coordinate all sectoral activities within one school. A mechanism to coordinate all sectoral activities within one school did not exist previously. WFP has started leading this type of cross-sectoral coordination and bringing different UN agencies and NGOs together to discuss all the activities being implemented in the same school.

2.1.2.1 Protection and accountability

61. **WFP adhered to the principles of humanitarian assistance in conflict settings through the ESF in Lebanon.** The principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality were reflected in the targeting criteria: vulnerable areas, food insecurity, poverty, gender, reaching both displaced Syrians and Lebanese students. Not all public schools were targeted under the pilot scheme. How the selection of schools was communicated to municipalities and other schools in the same area was not evident. Within the schools, snacks were distributed in a dignified manner through the engagement of an international NGO working with the schools on school snack distribution.⁵⁹

62. **MEHE and school staff engaged with the design and implementation of the school feeding programme.** MEHE decided the schools where the school feeding was implemented based on agreed selection criteria. Changes in modalities or the composition of the school snacks occurred in close coordination and consultation between WFP, schools and MEHE.⁶⁰ One of the main complaints from schools and parents was the lack of diversity in the daily snack. WFP responded to feedback by providing a greater variety of fruit selections. The composition of the snack has evolved since 2016 to improve the nutritional value and to consistently include fruit, a protein source, and dairy. Students are now provided with a piece of fruit (an apple or banana) and a carton of Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) milk or peanuts each day with a nutritional value averaging 250 calories.⁶¹ The nutritional value was increased from 160 kcal per person per day in 2017 to 250 kcal per person in 2019.⁶²

63. **School feeding aimed to reduce drop-out rates to support protection.** The objective of supporting retention rates and reducing drop-out rates was expected to also have an impact on the protection of vulnerable children. Sensitizing parents to keep their children at school reduced the likelihood of children dropping out. Similarly, if children are motivated to come to school to receive a snack then the likelihood of them not coming to school would decrease. The AUB study noted that a higher percentage of boys and girls in the morning shifts of intervention schools reported a stronger sense of belonging and a feeling of safety at school than in the control schools. These factors are expected to encourage children to attend school.

64. **Accountability to Affected Populations was strengthened through the presence of the external implementing partner IOCC.** The presence and monitoring of IOCC in all the intervention schools contributed to regular communication with school directors and staff. Principals, in the majority of the schools surveyed as part of the AUB study confirmed this. “They are always coming and going. I tell her [IOCC employee] “You were just here! but no, they revisit in the afternoon to monitor the children while eating and if they’re liking it. IOCC [employee] even goes around the students and asks them about their preferences.”⁶³

⁵⁹ School feeding progress reports 2018-2019.

⁶⁰ WFP Schools Snacks Outcome Report 2017-2018.

⁶¹ AUB Study Report.

⁶² PRRO SPR 2017.

⁶³ AUB study report

2.1.2.2 Complementarity with other humanitarian and development interventions (WFP and others)

65. **WFP as one of the leading agencies in the provision of humanitarian assistance in Lebanon took part in food security analyses with other UN agencies informing the design and implementation of WFP interventions.** These interventions included: the school feeding programme, including the Annual VASyR conducted with UNHCR and UNICEF; a 2017 Rapid Poverty Assessment conducted with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), UNDP and UNICEF; and the 2016 Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in Lebanon with ESCWA. These assessments contributed to the prioritizing and complementarity of programming.

66. **School feeding in Lebanon supported Vision 2020 WFP Syria+Five.** Vision 2020 was formulated around four related strategic objectives, each working to build the capacities of beneficiaries in Syria and host countries alike. School feeding supported the objectives of providing nutrition interventions, improving children's access to education, links with society safety net systems and building national capacities.⁶⁴

67. **School feeding interventions were coordinated by the Education Sector Working Group and reported on under the Food Security sector.** WFP is the main provider of school feeding activities although some NGOs are implementing smaller school feeding initiatives, mainly in informal education settings. Informal education settings do not fall under the responsibility of MEHE and were outside the scope of this evaluation. It was not possible to form a view on the quality and nutrition value of the snacks provided by other partners.

68. **While programme documents (CSP, PRRO 200987, EMOP 200433) did not reference the coordination and complementarity between school feeding and other programme interventions such as FFAs and CBTs, the implementation of ESF did benefit from working closely with other units such as Supply Chain, Procurement and AAP.** School feeding and nutrition were both administered by the same Policy Officer, which strengthened the synergy between both. While there is strong link between school feeding and nutrition, the documentary or interview evidence did not indicate that the links with other components or with resilience focused programmes were sufficiently explored. Procurement, distribution and quality of produce provided to children were of high-quality and reflect strong management and response plans. This provided scope to work with partners with less capacity, for instance small-scale farmers who would benefit from capacity building to meet WFP quality standards.⁶⁵

69. **Access to education and school retention required the complementary efforts of multiple partners to address the gender and age specific education barriers for both Lebanese and Syrian children.** References were made to working in partnership with other agencies active in the education sector, such as UNICEF. The most direct cooperation linked to school feeding was under the Minilla programme (ended in 2018) implemented and monitored jointly by UNICEF and WFP. Coordination of interventions and seeking complementarities among agencies took place in the education sector working group.

70. **Some schools received other external support from NGOs or other UN agencies.** It was noticed during the field visits that the capacity of schools differed depending on their location and whether they had received additional support from other external partners. It was unclear the extent to which this additional support had been considered in the school selection process or if support was provided to schools that did not have the necessary logistics in place. For instance, applications to run a school kitchen require sufficient space to be refurbished by WFP and for installation of the necessary equipment.

71. **WFP took steps to coordinate all sectoral activities within one school.** A mechanism to coordinate all sectoral activities within one school did not exist previously. WFP

⁶⁴ WFP Vision 2020 WFP Syria+Five. Securing the Future Together.

⁶⁵ Interviews with local implementing partners.

has started leading this type of cross-sectoral coordination and bringing different UN agencies and NGOs together to discuss all the activities being implemented in the same school.⁶⁶

2.2 Area 2 – Results of the Programme

2.2.1 EQ3: Education & food and nutrition security

EQ3: To what extent has school feeding as an emergency response supported the education of girls and boys, and has contributed to their food and nutrition security in crises and emergency situations?

Key findings⁶⁷

- Findings under EQ3 are supported by a school-based and child-focused survey conducted by AUB. The full survey report is attached to the report at Annex 1.
- School feeding has increased the retention of children in both morning and afternoon school shifts—especially the latter—and is positively influencing the enrolment rate of Syrian refugees. Schools where the school feeding intervention took place have reported improved retention rates and the availability of school snacks provided an incentive for enrolment in addition to the quality of the education provided. Supporting retention and providing an incentive for enrolment have a direct effect on the education of boys and girls.
- School snacks were available at the SF target schools as planned and reached Lebanese and Syrian refugee school children equally, with gender balance across both groups. Disruption to the provision of snacks occurred only when schools were forced to close due to outbreaks of social unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The AUB survey data on school snack intake found that the dietary habits of children in the afternoon shift changed as a result of snack provision and also of snack distribution timing. This change in dietary habit and the diversity of snack has had a direct impact on the nutritional security of students.
- In the morning shift, the school snack changed the dietary diversity of the food consumed by children. In the afternoon shift, the snack increased diet diversity and also filled an essential gap in the variety of food not otherwise available to those children. Distribution of the snack before recess contributed to a larger proportion of children consuming the snack at school.
- The AUB study showed that the distribution of the snack within school hours is essential for children. The snack can be viewed as a primary source of food and as a means of increasing food intake among this sub-population, with potential to alleviate short-term hunger.
- ESF has had an impact on children's food insecurity, especially those from populations with lower socioeconomic status. A significant decrease in child-reported food insecurity experience was found among children attending afternoon school shifts. For Syrian children, this also translated into lower experiences of food insecurity (skipping meals leading to short-term hunger).
- The AUB study found that, in the morning shift, school feeding had a stronger effect on diet diversity for girls than for boys (5.32 versus 5.16 respectively). The increase in dietary diversity was significant for both Lebanese boys and girls, but more pronounced in girls, indicating that the ESF was able to fill a specific dietary diversity gap for girls⁶⁸.
- The school snack provision constituted (limited) financial relief to families. During interviews and FGDs, participants disclosed that the school snack provided some financial relief to families by contributing to a reduction in children requesting pocket money to buy snacks from school shops. This was the case for Lebanese and, to a

⁶⁶ Based on feedback received from UN agencies in-country.

⁶⁷ The evaluation report aims to capitalize on the AUB study findings provided in Annex 1. Evidence and findings have been extracted from the AUB report to respond to the questions and sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. The AUB study provides additional information and evidence that complements the findings and analysis included in the main evaluation report

⁶⁸ AUB Study Appendix 3 – Gender Differences.

greater extent, Syrian families who ordinarily might not be able to afford the snack items (perceived to be rich in nutrients).

2.2.1.1 Reaching beneficiaries

72. **WFP has provided the school snack to the selected schools and has reached both vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian children in public schools.** The CSP has a target of 100 schools to be reached by 2021. WFP reached 62 intervention schools in 2019-2020 and is on track to achieve the 2021 target. The programme was able to exceed its target student population for the academic year in 2016/17 and 2017/18. Gender equity was achieved among Lebanese and Syrian children. Refer to Table 1 for complete data on the number of children reached.

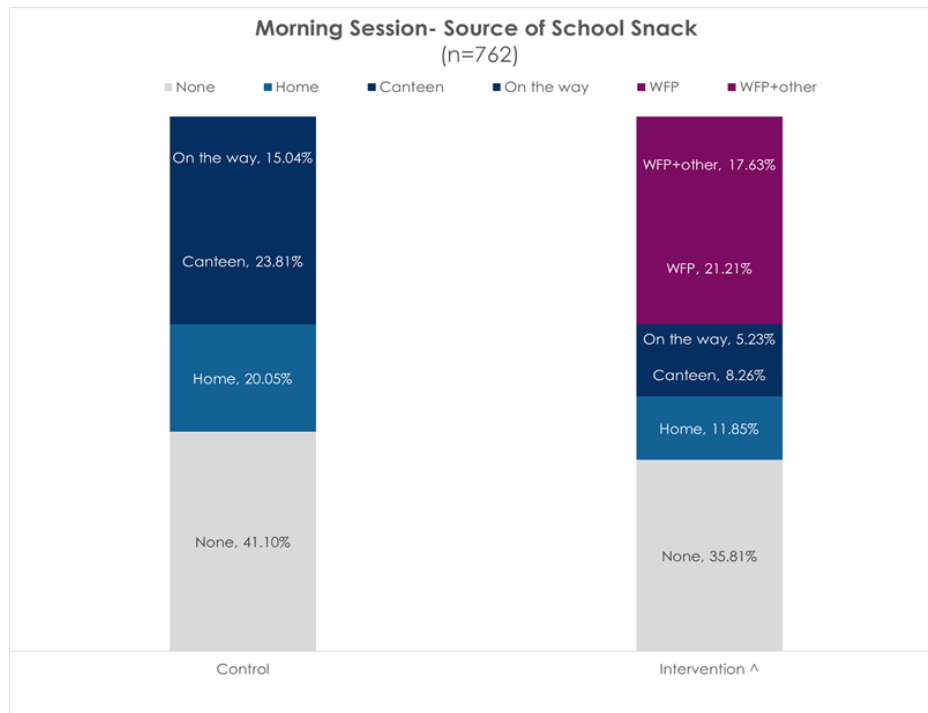
73. **Eight of the twelve schools that participated in the AUB study distributed the school snacks around five minutes before recess in the morning and afternoon shifts, a timeframe which the design considered to be most effective.** Others distributed the snack during recess and a few schools provided the snack when children leave school in the afternoon shifts.

74. **Dietary habits at school changed through WFP's school snack programme depending on the timing of the distribution.** The AUB study showed that **in the morning session**, more than half of the children ate a snack at school, 59 percent in the control schools and 65 percent in the intervention schools. While the main source of the snack was from home, the school canteen and surrounding neighbourhoods were also prominent snack sources. In the intervention schools, the WFP snack was the main source of food consumed at school (see Figure 1, AUB study).

75. For the afternoon shifts, **the AUB study showed that in the intervention schools that distributed the snack before recess, a significantly higher proportion of children consumed the snack at school (62 percent) compared with children attending control schools (28 percent intake of a snack).** Children attending intervention schools that distributed the snack after scheduled hours demonstrated a similar snack intake pattern with children attending control schools (31 percent versus 27 percent school snack intake, respectively) (see Figure 2, AUB study).

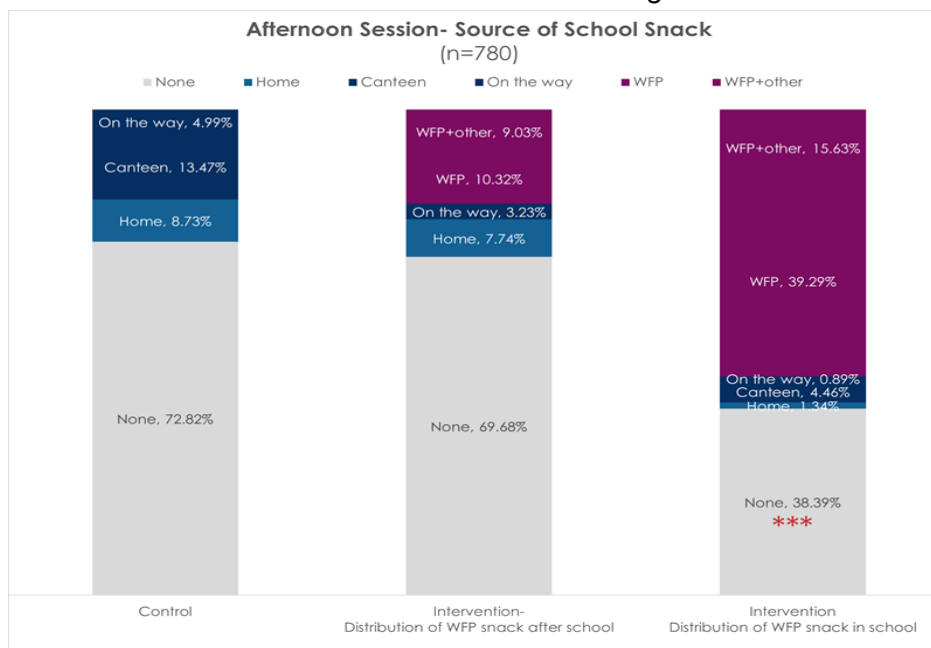
76. **The data on school snack intake showed that the dietary habits of children in the afternoon shift—attended by Syrian children—changed as a result of not only snack provision but also of snack distribution timing.** The AUB study showed that the distribution of the snack within school hours is essential for children as the snack could be viewed as a primary source of food and as a means of increasing food intake among this sub-population to potentially alleviate short-term hunger.

Figure 1 Source of school snack for children attending the morning shift



^ Intervention schools without the inclusion of one school that distributed the snack after recess.

Figure 2 Source of school snack for children attending the afternoon shift



(*** P value <0.001)

77. **The AUB study showed a general acceptability of the snack composition by the children.** The majority of the children consumed the snack, whether at home or at school. Figure 1 shows a good acceptability of the snack by the children. Between 13 and 22 percent of children did not consume the snack at school at all in the week prior to data collection (Figure 3 and Figure 4). During the AUB study, school directors mentioned that students took their snacks home when they were not hungry during school time.

78. **Milk was the least preferred snack and to avoid waste, students were encouraged by school staff to take it home.** It was noted that there is a cultural preference for milk to be consumed warm or with sugar or other foods. Most parents also reported preparing desserts

with the milk cartons, specifically “riz-b-halib” and “mohalabiyeh” – two versions of Arabic rice pudding, which includes added sugar. This was also mentioned by a school director in the North “*They do not eat it directly, but rather take it home for their mothers to prepare riz-b-halib [rice pudding] during the weekend*” and by a Lebanese parent in Bekaa “*My eldest daughter doesn't like milk, but her brother does. Sometimes she gives it to her younger brother and sometimes she piles them until they are around 10 then asks me to prepare riz-b-halib [rice pudding] for her.*” This is in line with the data from the children surveys, which revealed that 35 percent of children in both morning and afternoon shifts did not drink the milk at school in the week before the survey (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

79. In other instances, **snacks were reported to be shared with family members either because children did not like the item or because they wanted other family members – parents or siblings enrolled in schools not benefiting from the ESF programme – to enjoy the snack.** The latter was mostly reported among Syrian parents. As one Syrian parent in Mount Lebanon indicated “*My children know that I like [peanuts], so each one of them puts aside some of them. Mom this is for you, you like peanuts,*” and one Lebanese parent in Bekaa indicated, “*I have 4 children, two of them who do not receive the snack, so he brings the apple and shares it with his brother.*”

Figure 3 Morning shift – Percentage of children that did not consume the WFP snack in the last week

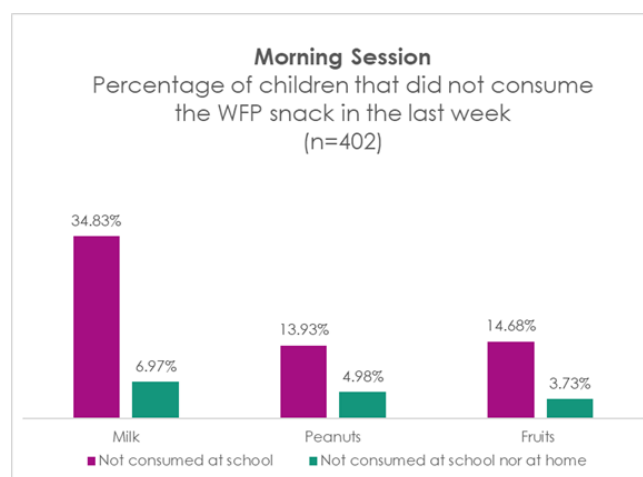
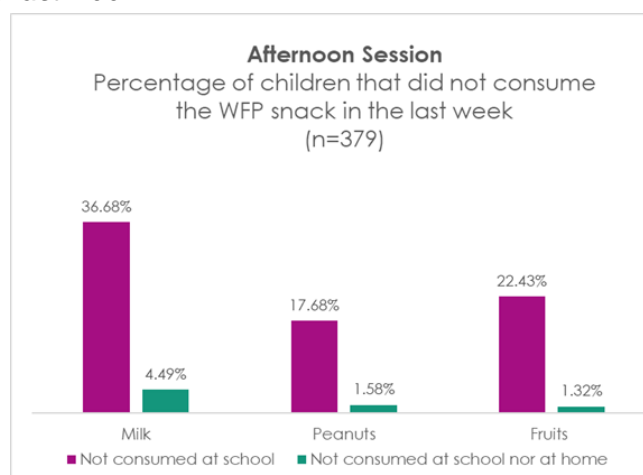


Figure 4 Afternoon shift – Percentage of children that did not consume the WFP snack in the last week



2.2.1.2 Nutritional status

80. **The nutrient composition of the snack pack (fruit, protein, dairy) provided 13 percent of children’s caloric intake.**⁶⁹ The AUB study found that compared with the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs), the snack covered around 13 percent of children’s daily caloric needs. The snack additionally provided 7.5 percent of protein needs, 18 percent of fat needs, and 14.4 percent of carbohydrate of children’s needs. The snack was also rich in vitamins and minerals and covered around 51 percent of vitamin A, 21 percent of vitamin C and 12 percent of folate of children’s daily needs.

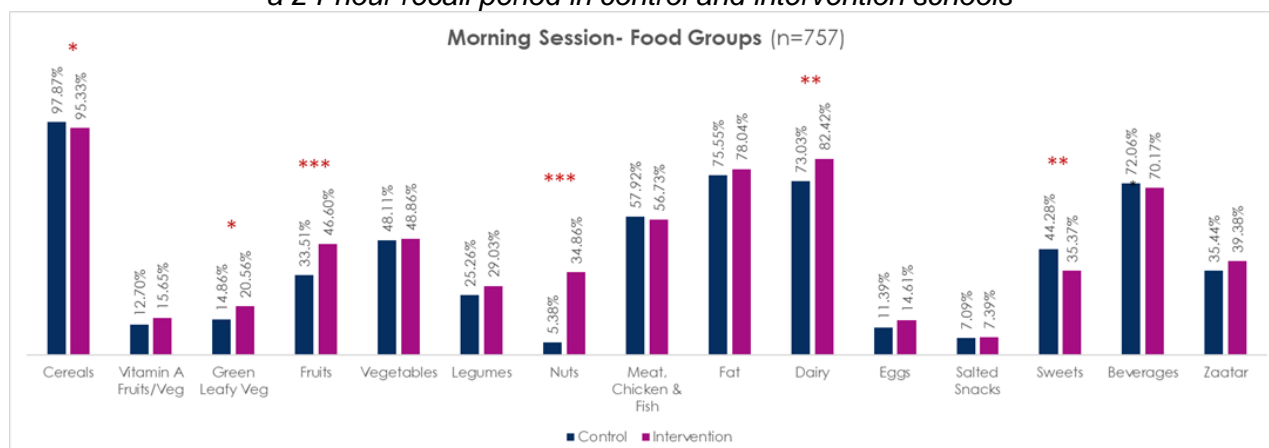
Table 7 Nutrient composition of snacks compared to the DRI

Nutrient	Average Snack p/day	Recommended DRI ¹	% DRI met from the snack
Calories (kcal)	230	1700 [^]	13.5
Protein (g)	6.4	85	7.5
Fat (g)	10.2	57	18
Carbohydrates (g)	30.6	212	14.4
Sodium (mg)	148.3	2200	6.7
Iron (mg)	0.6	8	7.5
Folate (mcg)	36.6	300	12.2
Zinc (mg)	0.8	8	10
Calcium (mg)	97.8	1300	7.5
Vitamin A (mcg)	306	600	51
Vitamin D (mcg)	0.8	15	5.3
Vitamin C (mg)	9.5	45	21.1

Source: Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 Eighth Edition for children aged 9-13, both males and females. Corresponds to the mid-range recommended intake for males and females.

81. **The AUB study indicated that children’s diversity of diet and intake of micro-nutrient rich foods had increased in the intervention schools and that there was a consistent and significant increase in dairy, nuts and fruits intake.** (See Figure 5 and Figure 6.) In Lebanon, a middle-income host country, where childhood overweight rates are high and wasting is almost negligible, the school feeding programme ensured the availability of an alternative healthy snack at school. It is particularly important for Syrian refugee families in Lebanon where 92 percent are food insecure associated with reduced consumption and difficult access to diversified food. The snacks in afternoon shifts have helped to fill the nutritional gap and significantly improve the diet diversity score among Syrian children.

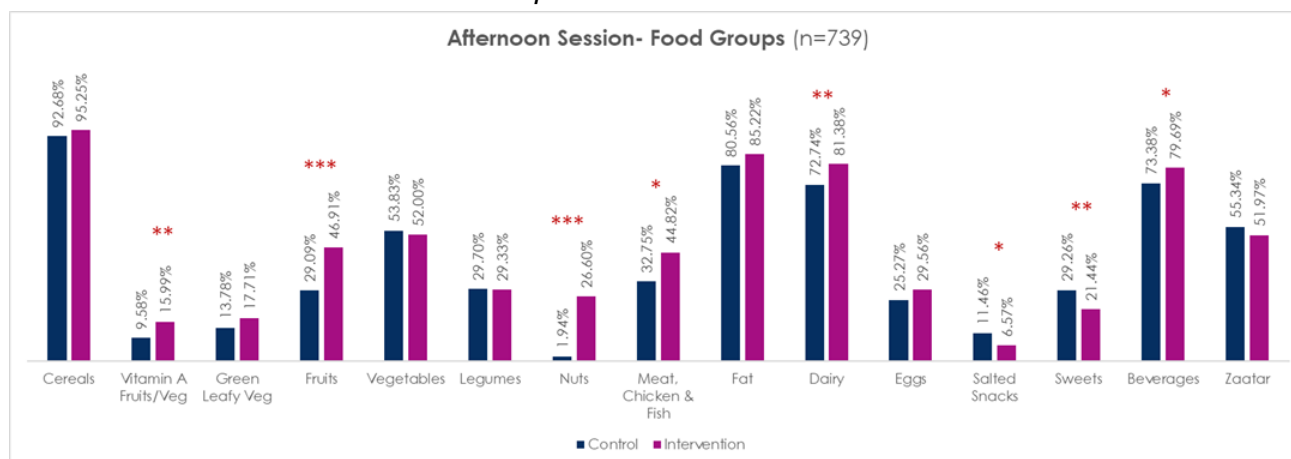
Figure 5 Proportion of morning shift children that consume each of the food groups, over a 24-hour recall period in control and intervention schools



Models adjusted for child age, sex, location, and gender of the head of the household and household employment status. (*P<0.05 **P<0.01 ***P<0.001)

⁶⁹ In the month of January 2020 carrots were distributed on 5 days, bananas and apples on 7 days, milk on 9 days and peanuts on 10 days.

Figure 6 Proportion of afternoon shift children that consume each of the food groups, over a 24-hour recall period in control and intervention schools



Models adjusted for child age, sex, location, gender of the head of the household and household employment status. (* $P < 0.05$ ** $P < 0.01$ *** $P < 0.001$)

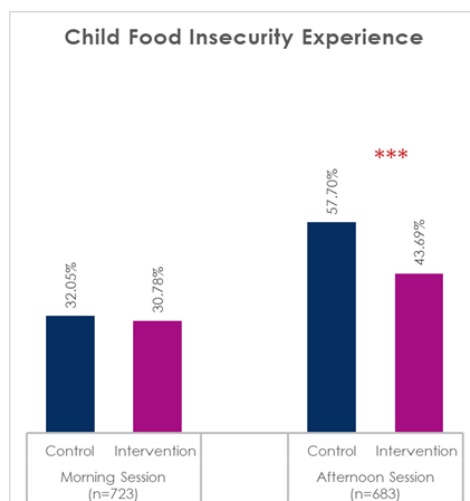
82. Gender differences in diet diversity were considered. The AUB study found that in the morning shift school feeding had a stronger effect on diet diversity for girls than for boys (5.32 versus 5.16 respectively). The increase in dietary diversity was significant in both Lebanese boys and girls, but more pronounced in girls, indicating that the ESF was able to fill a specific dietary diversity gap for girls⁷⁰. Girls had a lower diet diversity than boys in control schools but a higher diversity in ESF schools. Unlike Lebanese children, there were no gender differences in diet diversity levels for Syrian children in the intervention schools. The diet diversity levels for Syrian children, for both girls and boys, was significantly higher in the intervention schools than in the control schools.

2.2.1.3 Food security

83. Food insecurity experience for Syrian children attending afternoon shifts was reduced. In the morning shift, child-reported food insecurity experience did not differ significantly between children attending control schools (32 percent food insecure) and intervention schools (30 percent food insecure). In the afternoon shift, children attending the control schools were more likely to report experiencing food insecurity (57 percent) as compared to children attending the intervention schools (43 percent). Children in the intervention schools, for example, reported being less likely to skip a meal (37 percent control, 22.7 percent intervention) and being hungry and not eating (31 percent control, 17 percent intervention). The effects of SF on Syrian children's food security was of similar magnitude for both boys (56.76 percent) and girls (55.56 percent) in intervention schools compared with the control schools where the food security levels for both girls and boys were on average 41.80 percent (see Appendix 3 – Table 2 of the AUB study report for gender differences).

⁷⁰ AUB Study Appendix 3 – Gender Differences.

Figure 7 Proportion of children experiencing food insecurity attending the morning and afternoon shifts in control and intervention schools.



84. **The school snack provision constituted a limited financial relief to families.** In interviews and FGDs the snack provided at school was perceived to constitute a financial relief to families by contributing to a reduction in children requesting pocket money to buy snacks from school shops. This was the case for Lebanese and, to a greater extent, Syrian families who may not be able to afford the snack items (perceived to be rich in nutrients). Illustrative examples that confirming a recurring theme in the FGDs: *“Financial support. There are children who take a 1,000 LBP, a dollar, 2,000 LBP, 500 LBP. Some parents can’t give their children [money]; this snack fills in the gap for parents who cannot give [money].”* Another Syrian parent from the North reported: *“I haven’t been able to get them [food items provided in the snack] since the beginning of the year. I get happy when the school gives them. First, my child’s cravings are satisfied, second, he is getting nourished, and third I am not asked to get them ... I can’t buy them honestly”.*

85. **Differences in geographical vulnerabilities influenced the extent to which the school snack substituted a meal and alleviated hunger.** FGDs with school staff and parents conducted as part of the AUB study revealed the snack being distributed is substituting a meal and alleviating hunger for the majority of Lebanese and Syrian students in the North and Bekaa. The same applied for Syrian students in the South but not for the Lebanese students who brought their own sandwiches; in those cases, the snack was considered a supplement. In Mount Lebanon, it was perceived to be a snack rather than a meal substitution for both communities.

2.2.1.4 Attendance, enrolment, retention

86. **School feeding influenced attendance rates in the afternoon shifts attended by Syrian children.** In the morning shift, no significant association was observed between the ESF programme and school absenteeism (Figure 8). Children who received the ESF snack in the afternoon shift were absent from school on fewer days than children from control schools. For children who attended 70, 85 and 90 percent of the school year, those receiving the snack in the afternoon shift were significantly less at risk of missing school compared to control schools ($P < 0.001$) (Figure 9). It should be noted that gender data are not part of school absenteeism records and, therefore, the AUB study was unable to stratify absenteeism data by gender. In the FGDs the majority of the Lebanese and Syrian parents saw it as an encouraging factor and a motivation for their children to attend school. Among school staff, participants in one school only (out of three), perceived that the snack had an effect on attendance. This was illustrated by a teacher from Akkar who emphasised that *“There is no more absence. No one is absent in morning sessions”.*

Figure 8 School absenteeism in 16 control and interventions schools

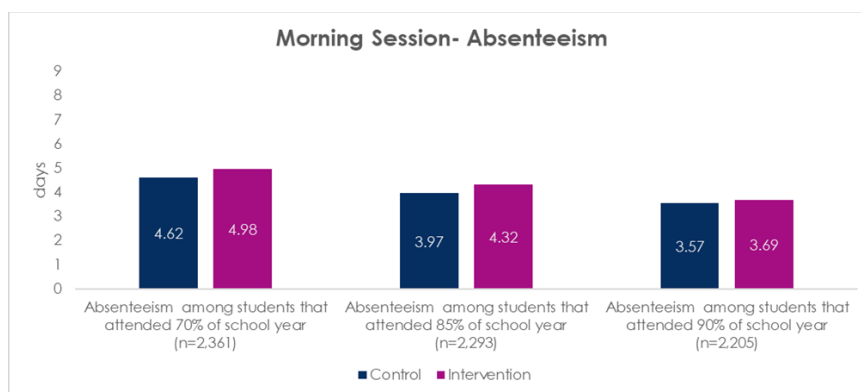
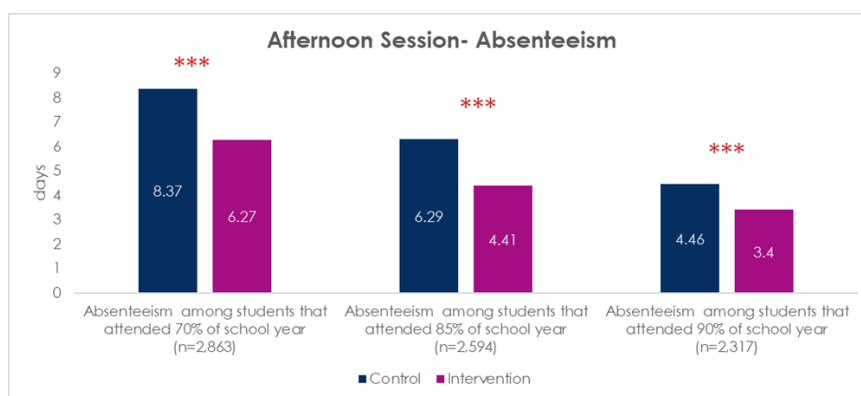


Figure 9 School absenteeism in 12 control and interventions schools



Models adjusted for child grade, location and school size. (* $P < 0.05$ ** $P < 0.01$ *** $P < 0.001$)

87. **Availability of school snacks provided an incentive for enrolment in addition to the quality of the education provided. However, there was insufficient evidence to decisively state that the school snack positively impacted enrolment.** The majority of school principals interviewed as part of the AUB study reported that school feeding was considered as an incentive for school enrolment, especially for siblings and cousins of children already enrolled⁷¹. A number of them specified that the financial difficulties Lebanese families were going through were the main reason for increased enrolment in public schools. There are multiple factors influencing school enrolment. Lebanese families experiencing increased poverty due to the economic crisis are opting to send their children to public schools as they can no longer afford private schools. In January 2020, MEHE announced that 39,189 students switched from private to public education during the current school year as result of financial distress. This represents a 15 percent increase from the 260,000 Lebanese children who registered at the beginning of the academic year in September 2019.⁷² For Syrian families, multiple barriers to children accessing education exist, including transportation costs, having registration papers, and the need for children to work or not. In both Lebanese and Syrian families, the importance attached to education is high within the culture and societies.

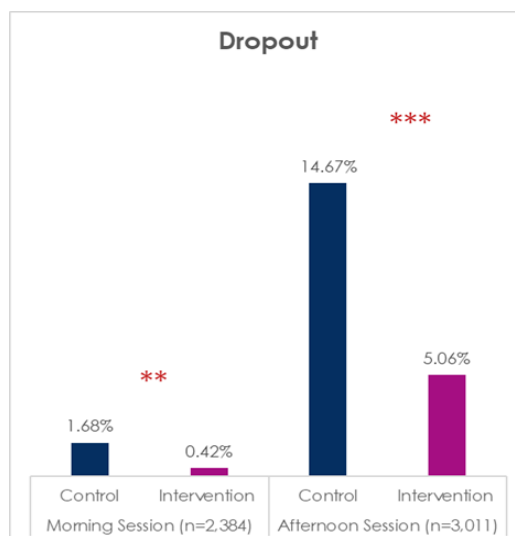
88. **Schools where the school feeding intervention took place the retention rate was improved.** Data on school dropouts was collected from morning and afternoon school records for all students attending grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the 2018–2019 academic year in eight intervention and eight control schools. Participation in the ESF programme was associated with a significant decrease in school dropouts for children in the morning and afternoon shifts. Gender and age-disaggregated data on retention was unavailable. Intervention schools had a 0.4 percent dropout rate in the morning shift and 5 percent dropout in the afternoon shift

⁷¹ Gender-disaggregated data on enrolment and absenteeism were not available to the evaluation team

⁷² <https://www.lecommercedulevant.com/article/29627-the-economic-crisis-has-pushed-40000-students-to-join-public-schools>

compared to control schools with 1 percent dropout in the morning shift and 14 percent in the afternoon shift.⁷³

Figure 10 Percentage of school dropout in children attending morning and afternoon shifts in control and intervention schools.



2.2.2 EQ4: Households and local economies

EQ4: To what extent has school feeding in emergencies strengthened the ability of households to cope with crises and (if applicable) helped to bolster local economies and markets?

Key findings

- Pilot ESF schools were located in socioeconomically vulnerable areas across all eight governorates of Lebanon.
- It was found that the school snack gave minimal financial incentive for families to enrol their children in primary school. The most common reasons for not attending school given by Syrian families were that their financial situation prevented them from sending their children to school and the cost of transportation and educational materials was prohibitive.
- Targeting both Lebanese and Syrian population groups was a request of the Lebanese government, is good humanitarian practice, and was essential in light of the deteriorating economic situation in Lebanon and for both communities.
- School feeding did have an impact on the nutrition and food security of children, but limited evidence was found that it had a direct effect on “negative coping strategies”. The main reason given for this was that school feeding was limited to a snack only and not a substantial meal.
- All snack components were procured locally but few agricultural producers were able to meet WFP standards. By working with a local supplier who procures all snack items locally the programme was able to adapt more easily to contextual changes or any crises events.
- Economic opportunities linked to the school feeding programme—through working with small agricultural producers or women’s organizations located in the different governorates—have not yet been fully explored.

⁷³ The results should be interpreted with caution, as the survey was unable to differentiate between children truly dropping out of school due to economic hardship or labor-related reasons and children dropping out from one school but actually re-enrolling in another school. The data presented here may therefore be biased towards depicting a higher dropout rate than the reality. These factors could not be accounted for due to the fact that no further data is available on reasons for child dropout from schools, nor was the survey able to track children who left a school, to see whether they had enrolled in another. This could have led to children being categorized as dropouts when in reality they were transfer students.

2.2.2.1 Reaching most vulnerable households

89. **SF schools were located in the socio-economic vulnerable areas in Lebanon with a high concentration of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese communities.** ESF schools were located across all geographical areas in Lebanon. However, this is not yet a nation-wide programme and not all schools in a geographical area or “cadaster” were included. There are approximately 1,256 public schools in Lebanon with WFP school feeding reaching approximately 4.7 percent of the total by the end of 2021. The fact that there is limited poverty data for the Lebanese population makes it difficult to assess to what extent the programme has reached the most vulnerable Lebanese communities. A link between the NPTP and ESF targeting has been absent.

90. **Syrian students enrolled have overcome multiple barriers faced by Syrian households to access education.** It was found that the school snack gave only a very limited financial incentive for families to enrol their children in primary school. The most common reasons for not attending school given by Syrian families was that their financial situation simply does not allow them to send their children to school and cover the cost of transportation (21 percent) and cost of educational materials (19 percent)⁷⁴. *Poverty is seen as the main barrier to enrolment. Vulnerability and food insecurity are increasing while coping strategies are shrinking. As for Lebanese families, increasing hardship is pushing them to take their children out of private schools and to send them instead to public schools. This in turn pushes Syrian children from first to second shifts in schools*⁷⁵.

91. **Targeting both Lebanese and Syrian population groups was a request from the Lebanese government, was good humanitarian practice and was also very relevant and needed when looking at the deteriorating economic situation for Lebanon and both communities.** A lack of social safety nets means that the economic slowdown is hitting people across the country, particularly the most vulnerable Lebanese families. There has been increased evidence that Lebanese children are being pulled out of private school and send to public schools as a result of the economic crisis.⁷⁶

2.2.2.2 Ability to cope with crises and emergencies

92. **By working with a local supplier who procures all snack items locally the programme was able to adapt more easily to contextual changes or any crises events.** There was one central location from where the snack components were delivered twice a week to the different schools across the country. In light of the recent road closures due to the civil protests, WFP’s implementing partners indicated during interviews that warehouses should be established in both the north and the south in order to be less impacted by closures and to respond to security concerns for travel around the country.

93. **School feeding did have an impact on the nutrition and food security of children, but limited evidence was found on the effects influencing “negative coping strategies”.** Children attending intervention schools spend more time at school as reflected in the higher retention and attendance rates. Therefore, children attending the SF intervention schools are more protected from negative coping strategies. SF had only a limited influence on enrolment. The main reason given for this was that school feeding was limited to a snack and not a substantial meal. The opportunity cost of enrolling children in school instead of sending them out to work was an important consideration, especially for Syrian families. Many families did not see the value of education when they—as refugees—have no right to work in the country they are residing in⁷⁷.

2.2.2.3 Inducing economic activity and women’s economic empowerment

94. **All snack components were procured locally through a local supplier.** There is limited gathering and analysis of data to determine to what extent local economies are affected by the procurement for school feeding. From February 2017 to February 2020 the school

⁷⁴ Evaluation of No Lost Generation / “Minlla”. Endline Technical Report.

⁷⁵ In-country consultations with UN agency.

⁷⁶ <https://www.mehe.gov.lb/ar/Projects/التعليم%20العام/RACEfinalEnglish2.pdf>

⁷⁷ Interviews in-country with UN agencies.

feeding programme procured 1,083 MT of fruits and vegetables, 642.3 MT of milk and 78.01 MT of nuts.⁷⁸ There was no data available on the farmers or other producers and to what extent their incomes have been affected by their involvement with the programme. It was found that WFP's quality standards for fruit were very high and that not all small holding farmers were able to meet these standards, particularly the consistency of supply with the required quality standards seeing the size of operation. Food losses were reported by WFP's supplier as an important challenge. In Lebanon only 240 suppliers of agricultural produce are potentially available and of these only 10 percent can meet WFP standards.

95. The environmental impact of the programme was not sufficiently considered and not linked to an add-on economic opportunity. The contractor responsible for packaging the snacks reported that a high percent of the bananas did not meet WFP's criteria (size, appearance). Food Loss and Waste (FL&W) has an impact on both the effectiveness as well as the efficiency of the ESF programme. In addition, FL&W decreases the environmental sustainability of the programme since FL&W has an impact on climate change and also increases the amount of garbage generated. With an expansion of the programme using current procurement policies the FL&W would increase. A positive environmental impact is IOCC's practice of recycling some of the paper bags that are used to prepare the individual snack portions.

96. Where economic opportunities were created women were given an opportunity. The supplier hired 20 workers, of which 18 were women and the majority were Syrian, to clean and repack the fruit. Employment in the small number of school kitchens was limited and women in the school kitchens worked on a voluntary basis. Twelve smallholder farmers were producing products for the school snack. All twelve farmers were male, it should be noted that often farming in Lebanon is a family-based activity and often too a male-based activity. It was not clear to what extent WFP has followed up on ensuring women employed within the school feeding related economic activities received fair compensation.

2.2.3 EQ5: Additional effects

EQ5: To what extent has school feeding as an emergency response had effects not yet foreseen in WFP's school feeding policy, but important in crisis and emergency settings?

Key findings

- The AUB study showed that the school feeding interventions did not affect social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian refugee students. This is mainly due Lebanese and Syrian children attending different school shifts in most instances. Based on the evaluation of the summer camps, it was found that supporting social cohesion requires concerted effort with activities supporting expected goals rather than simply bringing together youth from different nationalities without intervention.
- It was found that the school snack distribution did not reduce the incidence of child labour or early marriage. The opportunity cost of a snack was not considered a factor in a family's decision to send their child to school—its value was not comparable.
- The AUB survey indicated that school feeding supports equality between students from the same nationality and also between students from other social backgrounds. It supported higher self-esteem among the Lebanese and Syrian children through giving them a feeling of being valued. A sense of belonging to the school community was found with Lebanese children but not with Syrian refugee children.

2.2.3.1 Social cohesion

97. The nutrition summer camp evaluation provided evidence that nutrition summer camps impacted social cohesion in cases where a concerted effort took place in bringing students together. Summer camp quantitative surveys did not highlight an improvement in social cohesion. This was not supported in the qualitative observations that indicated relations across nationalities did improve over the course of the nutrition summer

⁷⁸ Data provided by the country office, May 2020.

camps.⁷⁹ Based on the triangulation of the findings in the LAU technical report and the AUB study report, it was evident that just bringing together youth from different nationalities did not automatically contribute to better cohesion or understanding between the different groups.

98. **Respondents in the FGDs presented a mixed view on the effects of social cohesion.** Mixed feedback among interlocutors were presented regarding social cohesion effects. *“We were all like siblings here”*, and when asked about acceptance of others: *“Some people yes and some people no”*. This being said, one school in particular, had some negative comments about social cohesion, for example: *“At the beginning, we used to think that if they’re from another country they will be condescending with us, and it stayed the same”*. *“They feel like they are more important than us”*. It is also important to point out other different views concerning social cohesion where students noted social class as a divergent point of comparison. Comments such as (translated): *“... And for us all to be wearing the same clothes”*, and *“Why do only four schools come? The private schools don’t come”*, point to the different aspects of social cohesion that not only involve differences in nationality but potential differences in socio-economic status.⁸⁰

2.2.3.2 Psycho-social well-being

99. **The AUB Study Report showed that school engagement and sense of school community increased in the morning shifts attended by Lebanese students.** Children attending school feeding schools in the morning shifts were significantly more likely to report “feeling safe at school” and “liking to go to school”. In the morning shifts, girls started with higher school engagement scores, however school feeding improved school engagement of both girls and boys equally. The AUB study did not show statistically significant differences in the school engagement score in the afternoon shifts among Syrian children. This was the same for both Syrian boys and girls.⁸¹

100. **School feeding influenced self-esteem of Syrian and Lebanese children.** Quantitative data under the AUB study did not indicate statistically significant differences in self-esteem reported by children attending intervention and control schools in both morning and afternoon shifts. This was not corroborated in the FGDs where other opinions were expressed by teachers, Lebanese and Syrian parents, and school principals. These FGDs revealed that the snack was perceived as giving the children a sense of self-worth. According to a Lebanese parent in the Bekaa, the snacks are *“An emotional support. They give the child his importance. I am present at school. Someone is thinking of me. Someone is supporting me.”* Children were reported to feel their school appreciated their academic performance by distributing the snack as a reward, as reported by a Syrian parent in Mount Lebanon: *“They feel they have brought it [home]. Even if it is a food they don’t even eat at home. They consider it is from their hard work.”*

101. **The summer nutrition camps allowed for identification and referral of children with psycho-social problems.** The summer camps were not sufficiently prepared for coping with the high number of psycho-social problems that were present. The absence of staff with qualified professional backgrounds made it challenging to deal with behavioural problems and more serious cases involving protection-related issues such as GBV and abuse occurring at home. None of the camp staff had a professional background in dealing with psycho-social trauma and serious cases had to be referred to external organizations and experts⁸².

2.2.3.3 Exposure to harmful practices

102. **Child labour in Lebanon among Lebanese and Syria children continues to rise to provide financial support to the family.** The 2016 Household Survey conducted by MOSA and UNICEF highlighted that the number of Lebanese children engaged in child labour was three times higher than in 2009. For Syrian children the number had increased by over 50 percent.⁸³ The percentage of children aged 5-17 who were engaged in child labour remained

⁷⁹ Assessment of the 2019 World Food Programme Nutrition and Health Summer Camps in Lebanon, LAU, p. 44.

⁸⁰ Idem p. 31.

⁸¹ AUB Study Report p.31.

⁸² LAU report p.41.

⁸³ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/59521>.

similar in 2018 (averaging 2.6 percent) with boys at higher risk than girls; 4.4 percent and 0.6 percent, respectively. Twenty seven percent of girls aged 15-19 were married in 2019, a slight reduction from 29 percent in 2018⁸⁴.

103. School feeding in Lebanon did not reduce the incidence of child labour or early marriage. In VASyR 2019, data shows that 4 percent of Syrian boys and girls do not attend school because of early marriage, and 4 percent of girls and 6 percent of boys do not attend school because of child labour. During interviews in-country, child protection agencies shared their views that the financial value of a school snack does not compare to the income a child can earn working or does not weigh up against a family's decision to have their child married. The opportunity cost of a snack was not considered a factor in a family's decision to send their child to school.

2.2.3.4 Other non-foreseen effects

104. School feeding instilled a feeling of equality between students, not between Lebanese and Syrian students, but more between the students from the same nationality. The AUB study report provided evidence that the snack promoted social interaction and helped children to develop better relationships. The snack promoted equality among children who may be coming from various social backgrounds. The school snack made them feel all equal. In the past some children did not have a snack while others did. This finding was corroborated in the LAU technical report. Students attending the summer camps expressed the importance of feeling socially equal.

105. School engagement and sense of school community: Discussions with school staff and parents revealed that students often exchange snack items with their peers, particularly milk, either because they do not like it, or they want to collect more milk boxes to take home and prepare other dishes with it. A staff member in Akkar mentioned, *"A whole class once collected the milk and they made riz-b-halib [rice pudding] the next day and shared it among themselves"*. This exchange brought them together, taught them to share and be compassionate towards each other. A school staff member in the Bekaa said, *"I noticed it twice. There are children who collect them [snack items and tell their classmate]: take it, I don't want my portion today. They are aware of this child's social situation ... They are considerate of each other's feelings."* Main factors influencing ESF results

106. External and internal factors influencing school feeding results are discussed in the answers EQs 3, 4 and 5. These factors are also reflected in the overall conclusions (see Section 3). In order to reduce duplication, this chapter does not provide explanatory details for each of the factors, but instead indicates which of the conclusions present a more in-depth explanation and analysis for each item.

- **External factors:**

- 1) Difficult political context with a deepening financial and social crisis.
- 2) A protracted refugee and humanitarian crisis with minimal connection between Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugee communities.
- 3) The engagement of essential staff within MEHE working with WFP and other actors supporting school feeding and addressing other barriers to education.
- 4) The commitment of education staff, especially the engagement of the school principals.
- 5) Coordinated efforts between different agencies in addressing barriers to education.

- **Internal factors:**

- 1) WFP's implementation and monitoring capacity to adjust the school feeding interventions to changes in the context and respond to the feedback from children, schools and parents.

⁸⁴ VASyR 2019.

- 2) The availability of financial resources allowed for pilot interventions in a limited number of schools.

2.3 Area 3 – Creation of sustainable system for school feeding

2.3.1 EQ6: Sustainability and connectedness

EQ6: To what extent has school feeding as an emergency response been coupled with creating a sustainable system for school feeding, in line with priorities and capacities of the partner government?

Key findings

- The link between a national school feeding programme and the wider national social protection system and strategy is not yet evident. This is mainly because a nation-wide social protection system is in a nascent stage. The current pilot programme has provided MEHE with an evidence base to allow for decision-making around the development of a national, gender-sensitive school feeding framework that addresses the needs of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee students as well as responding to an emerging crisis (whether this is an influx of new refugees or widespread social/political unrest).
- School feeding targeted the needs of boys and girls in two vulnerable population groups which have different priorities and vulnerabilities. School feeding is still in a piloting and learning phase with MEHE considering, together with WFP and other stakeholders, the most effective modalities for the Lebanon context. If a decision is taken to move to a national school feeding framework, clarity is required around the specific vulnerabilities the programme aims to address to cover the needs of both Lebanese students and Syrian refugee children in the areas of food insecurity, improved school enrolment or retention, increased nutrition awareness, and healthy eating behaviour.
- Strong commitments were found within MEHE to developing a nation-wide school feeding programme. The current ESF institutional set up allowed for strong national ownership. However, the pilot phase is yet to be translated into a roadmap to develop a contextually relevant and financially viable framework supported by other national and regional actors within Lebanon. Financing strategies beyond regular government budgets will be necessary to address concerns around financial capacity, especially given the current economic and social crisis.
- WFP provides capacity building support to MOSA in implementing the NPTP and overall institutional capacity strengthening with MOSA and MEHE. WFP is therefore well-placed to support the coordination and development of a framework supporting school feeding as part of Lebanon's social protection system.
- School feeding received good support from parents (both Lebanese and Syrian) but overall community connectedness was found to be minimal, most likely due to the pilot nature of the programme and the limited number of schools involved in each region. However, it was found that complementary initiatives at the community level should be further explored—for instance, the link with community-based kitchens often managed by women's organisations.

2.3.1.1 Action plan for transitioning to a nationally owned programme

107. **School feeding in Lebanon initiated as a pilot phase provided a basis for the government to introduce a safety net at school level.** The government does not have a national school feeding framework or strategy and does not have a well-developed social safety net system. WFP's ESF interventions were designed and implemented at the request of MEHE and have been carried out in close coordination with the Counselling and Guidance Office (DOPS) and RACE PMU.

108. **School feeding is not yet part of a wider social protection scheme in Lebanon.** Social protection is at a nascent stage in Lebanon with the NPTP the first social assistance programme targeting the most vulnerable Lebanese households. Financed by the World Bank, WFP, UNHCR, the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, Germany and other donors, the NPTP is implemented by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM)

and MOSA. The NPTP social assistance comprises: i) comprehensive health coverage; ii) waivers of school registration fees and schoolbooks; and iii) food assistance via the e-card voucher programme. The evaluation did not note any linkages between school feeding and the wider social protection discussion.

109. **SF targeted the needs of two vulnerable population groups which have different priorities and vulnerabilities.** SF is still in a piloting and learning phase with MEHE considering, together with WFP and other stakeholders, the most effective modalities for the Lebanon context. If a decision is taken to move to a national school feeding framework, clarity will be needed around the specific vulnerabilities the programme aims to address to cover the needs of both Lebanese students and Syrian refugee children in the areas of food insecurity, improved school enrolment or retention, increased nutrition awareness and healthy eating behaviour.

110. **Weak or absent data sets on malnutrition in Lebanon hindered targeted actions.** In meetings with MEHE it was evident that there is a vision to provide 100 percent of schoolchildren with nutrition awareness to address the double burden of malnutrition. However, there is no recent data on the nutritional status of children in Lebanon and delays in implementing UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) have postponed the provision of information required to address malnutrition and to undertake targeted interventions and messaging. Addressing the double burden of malnutrition and the modalities of delivering both food and awareness messaging would have to be revisited, depending on the objectives of a national programme.

111. **The current ESF institutional set up allowed for strong national ownership within MEHE.** DOPS (the unit responsible within MEHE for the development of the framework) having ownership of the school feeding enables the programme to be well integrated into the educational system. Based on international good practice, it would be advisable to continue to use current institutional structures and not create parallel ones outside MEHE's budget and dependent on external donor funding. Creating a new unit would have a negative impact on internal coordination, motivation and ownership, availability of financial resources to fund additional staff, and long-term sustainability.

2.3.1.2 Integration of SF in policies and legislative frameworks

112. **It is too early for SF in Lebanon to assess its integration in national social policies and legislative frameworks.** However, during the interviews in-country it was found that within MEHE there is a strong commitment to develop the school feeding programme in coordination with other ministries and actors. It was also evident from the interviews that MEHE and other government decision-makers would like to see data from the piloting phase inform future decision-making. Currently, there is no line in MEHE's overall budget that would finance ESF activities. DOPS has argued if MEHE could demonstrate evidence of the positive impact of school feeding it would be politically feasible to create such a budget line, co-funded by MOSA, MOA, Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and even local municipalities.

113. **Financing strategies beyond regular government budgets will be needed to address concerns around financial capacity.** DOPS noted that short-term external funding would still be required to address the acute refugee and humanitarian crisis, which has impacted overall Lebanese living standards and has been compounded by a deepening economic and social crisis. This will put further pressure on the government to address weak social protection systems. But dwindling financial resources – both within Lebanon and from international donors – require government institutions to make choices on where to allocate funding. Undoubtedly this will also impact on school feeding modalities, which will require a cost-benefit analysis to support a budget for a national programme.

114. **WFP is well-placed to work with MEHE to link school feeding with the broader efforts in supporting Lebanon's social protection system and strategy.** WFP provides capacity building support to MOSA in implementing the NPTP and overall institutional capacity strengthening work with both MOSA and MEHE. WFP is therefore well placed to support

coordination and the development of a framework supporting school feeding as part of Lebanon's social protection system.⁸⁵

2.3.1.3 Alignment with national priorities and capacities

115. **The programme was aligned with priorities identified in the LCRP to respond to the basic needs of displaced Syrians and the most vulnerable Lebanese population.** Alignment with national priorities needs to be differentiated between the morning shift (Lebanese children) and the afternoon shift (Syrian refugee children). Because the programme is still in the piloting phase its effectiveness needs to be fully assessed (see section on Effectiveness). Preliminary results show that school feeding has the potential of addressing nutrition deficits, short-term hunger, and children's attention span in the classrooms.⁸⁶

116. **ESF schools were located in the most vulnerable areas in Lebanon** (see Annex 6 for location map). In this way the targeting of schools under the school feeding programme complements the social protection interventions currently being implemented by the Government, such as the NPTP implemented by MOSA which is providing support to very vulnerable Lebanese households.

117. **Improved coordination at school level:** WFP is implementing ESF through MEHE and two NGOs – IOCC (partner for the snack distribution, nutrition education and school kitchens) and DORCAS/Tabitha Relief & Development (partner for the school kitchens). WFP is envisaging the building of a monitoring dashboard that would improve information on ESF at the school level thereby increasing ownership by the schools.⁸⁷

118. **No links with informal education systems:** Currently, the ESF programme has no contact with the large number of informal education activities organised by NGOs where snacks are also provided. Neither the quantity nor the quality of the food provided in informal education activities is formally tracked by MEHE. It may be the case that the same student attends informal education activities during one shift and is in the formal education system in the other shift. It is important to ensure that the nutrition messages that children receive through the SF are not contradicted by those they receive in the informal activities.^{88 89}

119. **Solid management and monitoring capacity existed within WFP and implementing partners.** WFP, through IOCC, has ensured that targeted public schools have adequate storage space by providing pellets, curtains, and other items. IOCC uses a checklist that verifies school storage conditions as well as exposing school staff to the criteria required. WFP is also rehabilitating kitchens in the schools, which will be included in the next phase of the programme. Not all schools have supplies of safe drinking water, soap and sufficient garbage bins. Given that ESF has a health/nutrition objective, coordinating with UNICEF and other stakeholders implementing WASH activities would enhance the hygiene behaviour that ESF is trying to promote in schoolchildren and staff⁹⁰.

2.3.1.4 Community participation and ownership

120. To assess the sustainability of the ESF, the Evaluation Team looked at ownership at several levels: school, community/local, as well as MEHE's ownership of the ESF programme. Buy-in by school principals is key to the sustainability of the ESF programme (and eventually a national SF).

121. **Consultation with school principals took place at different steps of the programme.** When asked about the decision to implement the ESF in their schools, nine of the 12 school principals indicated in the AUB study they were approached by WFP staff for their input, whether through meetings or calls. Discussions tended to centre around the composition of the snacks, the mode and timing of distributions and storage capacity at schools. Three school principals indicated that they were not approached for inputs, however

⁸⁵ WFP Annual Completion Report 2018 – 2019.

⁸⁶ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, 2017-2020.

⁸⁷ In-country consultation with WFP and MEHE.

⁸⁸ For example, ESF emphasizes healthy eating habits and raises awareness regarding eating unhealthy snacks. Some NGOs distribute unhealthy snacks during the informal education activities.

⁸⁹ In-country consultations with IOCC and DORCAS.

⁹⁰ WFP monitoring reports.

this may be because they joined after the programme started. The following quotes from school principals corroborate the findings:⁹¹

“They kept coordinating with me for a while and asking what do you think and what do the children consume? How should we distribute it? What do you find the most appropriate? What time is the most appropriate to distribute?” (School principal, South Lebanon)

“It [implementation of the ESF programme] has become very normal to us. As administrators and supervisors [we ask] aren’t there apples today? What did they bring the children? What did they [the children] eat? It has become an integral part of the school. [...] It has reached a very successful stage. It definitely went through major challenges, but we overcame them.” (School principal, Bekaa Valley).

122. School feeding received good support from parents (both Lebanese and Syrian).

Parents indicated during the AUB study that although the level of education provided is the main reason for school enrolment, the availability of school snacks was an additional incentive, and for some it was the main reason: *“Last year, my kids were in the school just facing this one. They would always say: ‘mom, look at that school facing us [they offer snacks]’. I didn’t believe them at first. I decided to move them [to this school].”* One Syrian parent in the North stated: *“Number one is the educational level and the administration, as it should be. The [availability of the] snack has a role. [...] I wouldn’t enrol my child [in a school] for a meal to be honest with you.”* Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) are informed about the programme but overall support from parents had not been translated into their active engagement with the feeding interventions in schools.⁹²

123. Ownership of SF among school staff was mixed. At the school level, the AUB study and the meetings of the international experts with school staff show a mixed picture of ownership. Ownership is closely linked with the quality of the school principal and teachers. In the schools that the evaluation team visited, there appeared to be a high level of ownership where female principals paid out of their own pocket for sandwiches if a child came to school hungry. They also appeared to know the children by name and were in contact with their parents. Furthermore, they had created initiatives to demonstrate to children (and their parents) how to use the snacks (e.g., to make fruit salads, smoothies, rice puddings).

124. At the local/community level, there were several complementary initiatives for collaboration currently untapped. During the in-country consultations, UN agencies and NGOs indicated the existence of a number of possible initiatives at community level that have not been explored. Examples given included a community based kitchen funded by UN Women in Akkar, which employs both Lebanese and Syrian women, or the Food Heritage Foundation which has established community gardens in Mount Lebanon (Ain El Remmaneh) and the North (Halba, Akkar), and has community kitchens in the North (Al Mina, Tripoli) and the Bekaa Valley (Zahle and El Khiara). There are also several non-formal education programmes providing remedial classes as well as snacks, which are attended by schoolchildren from the community. An unexplored but potential partner could be some selected municipalities. Establishing decentralised partnerships between municipalities, cooperatives, NGOs and schools would not only enhance the programme’s sustainability by establishing local roots, but it would also increase its resilience (e.g., in the event of road closures food produced at the local level can still be delivered to schools, which is not the case if the food is produced centrally).

2.4 Overall assessment / Conclusions

125. Based on the findings presented in the previous section, a series of conclusions on school feeding is presented below. For each conclusion, the report also discusses its relevance for the claims and assumptions of the ToC for SF in Lebanon that informed the design of this evaluation (see Annex 4). The conclusions are followed by recommendations on how the country office and WFP can take action to build on the lessons learned from this evaluation.

⁹¹ AUB Study Report, p.13.

⁹² AUB Study Report, p.31.

Conclusion 1: Food security and diet diversity benefits (Relevance, Effectiveness, Impact)

C1: While school feeding in Lebanon mainly consists of a school snack – considered as a limited nutritional intervention – it contributed to improved diet diversity, a reduction in short-term hunger, improved food security and nutrition outcomes for both Lebanese and Syrian children, boys and girls.

This conclusion is based mainly on EQs 1, 2, 3

ESF is limited to the provision of a snack during recess rather than a meal. This evaluation has observed several positive effects from this intervention. The school snack distribution is associated with notable improvements in diet diversity among both Lebanese and Syrian children and with significant reductions in reported food insecurity among Syrian refugee children.

The programme allowed for adjustments to contextual changes and the nutritional needs of beneficiaries. Evidence shows that the programme had a greater impact on food security with Syrian children for whom levels of food insecurity were higher.

The timing of the snack distribution is essential to improving the dietary habits and increasing the nutritional intake among children especially for those attending the afternoon school shifts. For some children the snack was a primary source of food and alleviated short-term hunger. The nutrient composition of the snack pack provided 13 percent of children’s caloric intake.

In a few schools surveyed under the AUB study, the snack was distributed at the end of the day. This had implications on snack consumption and a potential reduction in nutritional and educational benefits for children.

The school feeding results align with accumulating global evidence on the impact of school feeding programmes and add contextual knowledge in a region where few school feeding evaluations have been conducted. School feeding has supported diet diversity and improved food security in the poorest Lebanese communities where the proportion of Syrian refugees living in poverty has remained consistent at 70 percent and the growing national financial crisis is projected to lead to a 50 percent increase in poverty rates of the Lebanese population.

Relevance for SF ToC:

- *Intermediate outcomes of improved micro-nutrient status; alleviated (short term) hunger; access to diversified food intake remain valid.*
- *Food security for children should be added as an outcome in updated school feeding ToC.*

Conclusion 2: Positive educational outcomes for both target groups (Effectiveness, Impact)

C2: Directly linked to improved food security and nutrition the school snack did have an effect on school retention and attendance for both boys and girls, in both morning and afternoon shifts, with a higher rate in the latter. The availability of the school snack was an incentive for enrolment mainly for the afternoon shift.

This conclusion is based mainly on EQs 1,3

The snack was associated with increase in school retention and reduction in absenteeism among Syrian children attending afternoon school shifts, and therefore has a role to play in MEHE’s strategy “Reaching All Children with Education”. The AUB survey data indicated that those children receiving the snack in the afternoon shift were significantly less at risk of absenteeism compared to control schools.

The limited effects of the programme on retention need to be viewed with caution because of the various factors which influence school retention. Multiple barriers to children’s access to education exist including transportation costs, having registration papers, and the need for children to work or not.

For the best possible educational outcomes from the school snack to be achieved, the timing of the school snack distribution is critical. This timing of the snack distribution and its ingestion is expected to affect children's classroom participation and learning.

School feeding is focused on retention and nutritional outcomes for children already attending the school. Children currently not attending public schools are not a target group for ESF. There is insufficient evidence to confirm whether the school snack could effect school enrolment.

Relevance for SF ToC:

- *Intermediate outcome of school attendance and retention to be maintained*
- *Retention should be more qualified and reference to be made to the multiple barriers and the interventions of multiple factors influencing school retention.*

Conclusion 3: Opportunity to strengthen the integration of humanitarian principles including protection, accountability and equity

C3: Intervention schools are located in vulnerable areas across Lebanon. However, without a detailed situational analysis it is difficult to assess whether the intervention schools are located in pockets with the highest concentration of the poorest households or with a high concentration of gender-specific protection concerns.

This conclusion is based mainly on EQs 1, 2, 5

Gender and protection were integrated in the design and implementation of the school feeding programme. However, room for improvement exists, especially in addressing gender and age-specific protection concerns that could be better considered in the criteria for the targeting of the locations for the intervention schools.

Accountability to affected populations is incorporated but could be further streamlined under the school feeding programme to support more systematic feedback mechanisms. While there are strong monitoring processes in place by WFP, MEHE, and the implementing partners this does not substitute providing children and parents opportunity to provide feedback in a manner by which their voices are heard.

Differences in geographical vulnerabilities influenced the extent to which the snack substituted a meal and alleviated hunger. Whether these geographical differences in vulnerability were considered in the targeting was not immediately evident.

Relevance for SF ToC:

- *Under activities a situational analysis should be included to support selection of the schools and ensure that the schools are located in the most vulnerable areas. It would also allow for identification of areas with gender-specific protection concerns. This will assist to ascertain whether the most vulnerable communities are reached, protection and accountability mechanisms are upheld.*

Conclusion 4: SF instilled equality between children

C4: There was limited evidence of the impact on social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian children, but the school snack distribution was perceived to instill a feeling of equality between children attending the morning or the afternoon session.

This conclusion is based mainly on EQs 4, 5

The AUB Study results show that the school feeding programme has improved children's diets and food security, with knock-on effects on school attendance as well as on psycho-social well-being in the context of Lebanon's chronic crisis. The survey also showed that school feeding had limited effect on social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian children.

Supporting social cohesion between two population groups is impossible if both population groups are attending separate shifts. Also, with the summer camps where children from different nationalities participated there were limited effects on social cohesion. This

illustrates that effects on social cohesion do not happen automatically but require carefully considered interventions.

However, evidence showed that the distribution of the snack created a sense of equality among peers, bringing children together. Expectations around social cohesion should clarify whether the objective is to support social cohesion between students from different nationalities or to support social cohesion and equality between peers.

Relevance for SF ToC:

- *It is unlikely to achieve higher-level outcomes and impacts in the ToC of school feeding unless they are specifically planned for and consciously promoted through added activities.*

Conclusion 5: Nutrition education addressed double-burden of malnutrition

C5: Nutrition and health education had effects on behavioural change when it comes to food intake and healthier choices.

This conclusion is based mainly on EQs 3

The different modalities of health education and awareness raising around nutrition had positive effects on nutrition awareness of children and their families. Effects on health and nutrition awareness were noticed as part of the school snack programme as well as an effect of the nutrition summer camps. These positive effects included improved dietary choices at home, including more vegetables and fruit in the children's and their family's diet.

The nutritional education component given by school health educators complemented the school snack distribution with nutrition awareness shifts in both morning and afternoon school shifts. The AUB study confirmed that children attending intervention schools demonstrated some increase in nutrition-related-knowledge and better attitudes towards healthy eating as compared to children attending control schools.

Relevance for SF ToC:

- *Increased nutrition awareness as intermediate outcome to be maintained.*
- *Changes in dietary choices to be made more explicit as an outcome.*

Conclusion 6: Absence of a national framework for school feeding impacts on setting of objectives and scaling up of school feeding interventions

C6: The development of a national gender equitable framework and policy for school feeding is needed to bring school feeding interventions to scale and to bring clarity and unity around objectives and modalities for school feeding.

This conclusion is based mainly on EQs 2, 6

It is unclear what the school feeding programme's priority objectives are, whether these relate more to food security or nutrition awareness, and how these relate to educational outcomes. A gender-equitable school feeding policy would bring greater clarity to these aspects of the programme and would allow other humanitarian actors to develop and provide support based on a clear platform. MEHE and WFP have taken concrete steps in the development of this framework.

The findings of this evaluation will bring MEHE and WFP the necessary evidence to finalize the formulation of the national school feeding framework.

Linkages between the school feeding programme and the efforts to support a wider national social protection system and strategy are not strongly evident. This is mainly because the development of a nation wide social protection system is in a nascent stage.

WFP has provided capacity strengthening support to MEHE in its efforts to move toward a nation-wide school feeding programme. A strong national ownership of the school feeding pilot scheme was evident. There are indications that the current efforts have the potential to

be translated into a roadmap to develop a contextually relevant and financially viable school feeding framework.

Relevance for SF ToC:

- *The assumptions behind the ToC pathway leading to a national framework and hunger-related safety nets require coordinated efforts between multiple government and international actors.*

Conclusion 7: Limited effects on local economic development and women's economic empowerment

C7: School feeding has reached a sufficient solid foundation to allow for more creative thinking around additional effects on local inclusive economic development both in urban and rural areas.

This conclusion is based mainly on EQs 4, 6

All snack components were procured locally but only a limited number of agricultural producers were able to meet WFP standards. Having a single local supplier allowed for smooth implementation, quality control, and facilitated close cooperation and monitoring by WFP and cooperating partner, IOCC. However, minimal evidence was available on how the incomes of small farmers and producers had been affected by their involvement with the programme.

Economic opportunities linked to the school feeding programme—for instance, working with small agricultural producers or women's organizations located in the different governorates—or issues of food losses and environmental impact have not yet been fully explored. Where possible, both Syrian and Lebanese women were given opportunity to be hired by the contractor and within the school kitchens. Opportunities for women remain limited because of the scale of the programme, the family-based structure of agricultural producers, and the limited rights to work for Syrian women.

While additional efforts and resources required are recognized, it was found that there was untapped potential to support local economic development and engage with community-based cooperatives and women's organisations. Creative thinking around economic opportunities will need to adhere to the quality standards of WFP and MEHE.

Relevance for SF ToC:

- *Pathways to more inclusive economic activities require localised strategies.*
- *Increased market opportunities to remain as an outcome and be supported by well-targeted activities and collaboration with other agencies.*

2.5 Recommendations

126. Based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the overall recommendation is to expand the school feeding programme in Lebanon. The specific recommendations of the evaluation team to further strengthen the school feeding results are outlined below. The target audience for each recommendation is also identified.

Recommendation 1: Review SF targeting process and criteria and make a tailored situation analysis mandatory

R1: Review the geographic and school-specific targeting of school feeding to reach the most vulnerable communities (food security, poverty, gender and protection) based on a mandatory situation analysis to communicate evidence-based targeting decisions.

Recommendation is based on: C1, C2, C3, C4, C7

Priority: High

Time horizon: short to long

Directed at: CO, MEHE, WFP, CPs, UN agencies

- Review needs to ensure implementation plans provide a clear justification of the selection of target areas within each governorate—using up-to-date data—integrating protection, gender, and age analyses.
- Make situation analysis mandatory—based on existing data sets—as part of the school selection process; to support evidence-based planning and targeting of SF interventions a tailored action-oriented situation analysis should take place prior to expanding the scope of school feeding. This will allow changes in vulnerabilities to be considered and allow targeting for the most vulnerable pockets within the different governorates.
- A more tailored situation analysis would place the programme in a better position to address specific gender and age protection vulnerabilities and enable it to reach out to potential partners for complementary interventions.
- A situation analyses should be ongoing throughout the programme cycle and integrate protection, gender and age analyses and be operations-oriented.
- Use these criteria and data in communicating decisions to local authorities and schools.

Recommendation 2: Continue to diversify SF modalities

R2: Support nutritional variety and consider options to expand reach by establishing more kitchens in schools and municipalities with high levels of poverty and decentralizing delivery at governorate level, to increase reach and variety.

<u>Recommendation is based on:</u> C1, C2, C5	<u>Priority:</u> High	<u>Time horizon:</u> Medium	<u>Directed at:</u> WFP and MEHE
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- The composition of the school snack currently considers the nutritional needs of school children in Lebanon (whether Lebanese or Syrian). The snack should be reviewed in order to sustain acceptability and mitigate children developing a dislike because of lack of variety. New food items could be added to the programme while ensuring cultural acceptability and high-quality nutrition standards, focusing on improving diet diversity while avoiding possible increases in sugar, salt and fat.
- Considering the contribution of the ESF to diet diversity and food security of vulnerable school children alternative delivery modalities could be considered for times when schools have to close because of social unrest or when other emergencies – such as the current COVID-19 pandemic – occur. Alternative modalities could be the possibility of delivering snacks to children’s homes or setting up a distribution centre in women’s community-based organizations, schools, or municipal localities with the necessary safety measures put in place. Decentralized procurement and delivery mechanisms should be explored—instead of a single, central warehouse—to increase reach and be shock responsive.
- Continue to analyse the nutritional quality of the ration provided to assess whether the nutritional objectives were met while taking into account the specific needs of the different target groups.
- The financial value of the snack composition should be considered. Assess whether an increase in snack components would be a greater financial incentive to parents sending their children to school.

Recommendation 3: Maintain and monitor implementation of guidelines

R3: SF implementation guidelines should be monitored and respected at school level to ensure maximum effects of the programme.

<u>Recommendation is based on:</u> C1, C2	<u>Priority:</u> High	<u>Time horizon:</u> Short to medium	<u>Directed at:</u> WFP, MEHE, schools
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- The importance of distributing the snack during school hours and at recess should be reaffirmed and monitored. The timing of the snack distribution is important in order to alleviate short-term hunger and contribute to cognitive engagement in the classroom.

Monitoring of the timing of the snack distribution should be done by MEHE and WFP's cooperating partners.

- Additional coordination with schools is needed to overcome the logistical and distribution challenges cited, possibly through incentives for distribution staff or different ways of distributing the snacks. Whatever the modality chosen the proper storing of the school snacks and the supervision of snack consumption should be maintained.

Recommendation 4: Link school feeding with social safety nets

R4: MEHE, WFP and its partners should be clear about the objectives of school feeding to be reflected in the national school feeding framework and demonstrate the link between school feeding and the development of a broader national gender-responsive social protection system.

<u>Recommendation is based on:</u> C4, C6	<u>Priority:</u> High	<u>Time horizon:</u> Short to Medium	<u>Directed at:</u> WFP, MEHE, MOSA
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- School feeding has a role in the development of social safety nets and in committing to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of “Zero Hunger” and “Leaving No One Behind”.
- School feeding interventions have the possibility of addressing multiple needs and challenges. To respond in an effective manner a SF advisory board could be created to develop a contextually relevant and financially viable school feeding framework and would include MEHE, MOSA, MOPH, and MOA.
- In light of the positive impacts found, MEHE, WFP and other stakeholders should explore opportunities and logistical and financial feasibility to scale up the intervention and include other public schools. Modalities that could ensure the sustainability of this school feeding programme should be explored, including a more regional based approach working with farmers and women's cooperatives to support local economies.

Recommendation 5: Maintain nutrition education and summer nutrition camps as instruments to address double-burden of malnutrition

R5: Maintain the nutrition education and the summer nutrition camps as a modality under the school feeding programme to address gender-sensitive nutrition awareness and gender-based protection concerns.

<u>Recommendation is based on:</u> C 4, C5	<u>Priority:</u> Medium	<u>Time horizon:</u> Medium	<u>Directed at:</u> WFP, MEHE, Cooperating Partners
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- Maintain the nutritional education component given by school health educators complementing the school snack distribution and monitor the effect on nutrition-related-knowledge and better attitudes towards healthy eating.
- The summer nutrition camps were found to address a need among children from vulnerable households, both Lebanese and Syrian boys and girls. The evaluation recommends the continuation of the summer nutrition camps with strengthening in areas of social cohesion and protection. Staff who are recruited should have a professional background in addressing psycho-social issues. This can be achieved through linking up with staff from well qualified NGOs or CBOs that meet WFP standards. Having a full-time psycho-social support counsellor for the duration of the summer camps, to coordinate the immediate management and referral of psycho-social cases, should be supported.
- WFP should consider sharing its technical guidance on nutrition with other organizations organizing summer camps including the summer schools organized by MEHE.

Recommendation 6: Develop an area-based approach for school feeding to link with local economic opportunities and support women economic empowerment.

R7: WFP and its implementing partners should consider developing an area based approach to facilitate the link with inclusive local economic development and support women economic empowerment.

<u>Recommendation is based on:</u> C7, C4	<u>Priority:</u> Medium	<u>Time horizon:</u> Medium	<u>Directed at:</u> Country Office, Cooperating Partners, FAO
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- At the moment there is a centralized approach to procurement and distribution of the school snack components. This allows for a smooth process of implementation and quality controls, but limits choices at a local level. It can also potentially affect the distribution of the snack in case of emergencies or road closures.
- Map at a local level potential partners that can support school feeding and provide support to the potential partners to meet WFP quality standards. Explore with other UN agencies—such as FAO or private sector actors—the provision of necessary technical assistance combined with possible links to WFP’s FFA/FFT programme.
- Possible partners to engage with at local level are municipalities, community kitchens owned by women’s organisations, community gardens, small-scale farmers or cooperatives.
- With an expansion of the programme using current procurement policies the FL&W is expected to increase. Food waste from the school feeding programme could be turned into a local economic opportunity for vulnerable families, women and youth linked to local cooperatives or women’s community organisations.
- As part of the implementation under an expanded scenario the links with community actors (parents, private sector, farmers, women’s organisations and CBOs) should be reviewed. Community involvement and ownership has the potential to contribute to sustainability and local regional development, allowing for regional responses during crises such as outbreaks of social unrest.
- Women’s economic empowerment should be actively promoted and the support of fair pay and labour conditions and possible links with ILO should be explored.

Recommendation 7: Revise the ToC

R6: Revise the ToC so that the terms are more reflective of the size and scope of the School Feeding Programme.

<u>Recommendation is based on:</u> C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7	<u>Priority:</u> High	<u>Time horizon:</u> Short	<u>Directed at:</u> WFP, MEHE
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- School feeding interventions are limited in scale due largely to funding constraints and the absence of a national school feeding framework. The ToC is seen as overly ambitious and not reflective of the available resources. The ToC should have core activities, outputs and outcomes that can be identified as the foundation for future expansion of the SFP when resources become available.