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Decentralized Evaluation

WFP Livelihoods and Resilience Activities in Lebanon

2016 - 2019

Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

1. This report covers the decentralized activity evaluation of the World Food Programme's (WFP) livelihoods and resilience programme ("the Programme") targeting displaced Syrians and host communities in Lebanon. The evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Lebanon Country Office (CO) to achieve learning and accountability objectives and to produce evidence and lessons learned from the design and implementation of the Programme in the period between August 2016 and April 2019.
2. Key users of this evaluation are the CO; Cairo Regional Bureau (RBC); WFP Headquarters (HQ); and WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV). The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the Government of Germany, the sole donor of the Programme, the Government of Lebanon, Cooperating Partners (CPs), other UN agencies, and Programme participants have an interest in the evaluation findings.
3. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, Lebanon has been at the forefront of one of the largest humanitarian crises globally; alongside 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese, the country hosts 1.5 million displaced Syrians¹. The Programme provides livelihoods support to around 12,500 vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese across Lebanon through Food Assistance for Training (FFT) or Individual capacity strengthening activities, and Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) or Asset creation and livelihood activities². Both FFT and FFA activities use conditional food assistance delivered through cash-based transfers (CBT) intended as remuneration or incentive for participation in the Programme.

Methodology

4. The evaluation was designed to assess the Programme against the following evaluation criteria: Relevance and Appropriateness, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. The main evaluation questions, as indicated in the Terms of Reference, were:
 - How relevant and appropriate is the Programme?
 - How effective is the Programme?
 - How efficient is the Programme?
 - What are the main impacts of the Programme and are they sustainable?
5. In order to respond to these questions, the Evaluation Team used a mixed-methods approach drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources. The team reviewed over 200 documents; interviewed over 70 key informants from a range of stakeholders; and conducted 28 Focus Group Discussions in sites derived from purposive sampling.

¹ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017-2020 (2019 Update).

² In 2018 the CO split FFA and FFT activities into four pillars representing the main areas of focus of the Programme: Pillar 1: Skills and vocational trainings, value chain development, market linkages; Pillar 2: Rehabilitation/construction of small-scale agriculture infrastructure; Pillar 3: Reforestation and forest management activities; Pillar 4: Construction/rehabilitation of farmers' markets.

Key Findings

6. The key findings of the Evaluation Team are summarized below.

Evaluation criterion 1: Relevance and Appropriateness

7. The evaluation found Programme objectives to be relevant and appropriate to the context. The CO is also suitably placed to complement its well-regarded large-scale cash response to displaced Syrians with livelihoods support and resilience-building.
8. The short-term nature of donor funding is not conducive to the adoption of long-term planning and implementation approaches, and to achieving inherently long-term resilience and livelihoods objectives.
9. The Theory of Change (ToC) and the livelihoods strategy underpinning the Programme are not clearly elaborated. The thinking behind the design and choice of activities, underlying assumptions, contextual factors influencing results, and the lasting change that the Programme ultimately expects to bring about are unclear.
10. The targeting approach does not lend itself well to reaching Programme objectives and is not harnessing the potential that complementary cash and livelihoods programming might have to synergistically strengthen food security, livelihoods and resilience outcomes in this context. In general, WFP Cooperating Partners (CPs) and participants interviewed showed limited understanding of the rationale underpinning targeting and of the overall goals of the Programme.
11. The CO has undertaken a number of positive measures to better understand the context and the different shocks and pressures confronting Syrians and Lebanese, men and women. Important efforts were also observed by the evaluation around greater involvement of CO and FOs in communities' consultations for selection of activities and identification of localities for implementation. Considering the highly politicized environment where the Programme operates this is a constructive step towards ensuring that livelihoods support is guided by impartial assessment of needs.
12. Mainly as a result of the dearth of labor market data in both Lebanon and Syria, FFT activities are not underpinned by country-wide labor market assessments. To redress this gap, the CO consults existing assessments conducted by other agencies and requests that CPs provide evidence of the link between training topics and market needs. That said, the evaluation has found that in some cases trainings (e.g. on photography or floriculture) are not aligned to market needs and their potential for equipping participants with marketable skills is limited. The design and implementation of FFT activities has also been challenged by the absence of a FFT guidance manual at corporate level.
13. Despite the high levels of social tensions in this context, there is no evidence of systematic conflict-sensitive assessments being conducted before the start of activities. The Programme has not developed a tailored strategic and programmatic approach which this evaluation finds could better and more appropriately respond to the different needs and harness the different capacities of Syrians and Lebanese.

14. The CO has undertaken positive steps to better tailor activities to the different needs of men and women, such as expanding the portfolio of FFT activities, which are considerably less physically demanding than FFA activities. The lack of provision of childcare facilities however, was found as an obstacle to the participation and retention of women in the Programme.
15. The bulk of Programme activities are geared towards supporting rural livelihoods. This is appropriate, given that the majority of displaced Syrians are concentrated in areas where agriculture, also for poor Lebanese, is the most important source of income. Building on ongoing programmatic efforts and joint initiatives with other actors however, more attention could be paid to the development of activities geared to the support of urban livelihoods as well.
16. This evaluation noted a high degree of alignment of the Programme with Government strategies and priorities, including with the Government strategy of response to the Syrian crisis and with initiatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and of the Ministry of Environment. The CO also closely liaises with the ILO, the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Social Affairs to align the targeting of Syrians displaced in FFA activities to existing national guidelines and legislation on employment.

Evaluation criterion 2: Effectiveness

17. Overall, the Programme has delivered its main outputs. The evaluation however noted significant departure from planned targets, in both activities implemented and participant numbers, highlighting a disconnect between planning and implementation, which might be partly explained by the compressed time for implementation.
18. The Food Consumption Scores and Coping Strategy Index slightly improved in 2017 and 2018 for Programme participants. This is consistent with findings from FGDs which pointed to very limited changes in the quality and quantity of food consumed mainly because of the small amount of cash transferred and the short duration of activities. In 2018 the proportion of targeted communities reporting benefits from an enhanced asset base improved significantly from 2017. Primary data echo this: the majority agreed that assets established were beneficial.
19. The Programme does not disaggregate outcomes for Syrians and Lebanese participants and does not systematically analyze outcomes by gender or by Persons with Disability. The monitoring framework also does not measure outcomes that are relevant for the objectives of the Programme, such as employment or self-employment attained following participation, increased agricultural production, or progress towards resilience-building, with repercussion on evidence-based programmatic decision-making. This is also symptomatic of a gap at corporate level: a recent Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience for example pointed out that current corporate tools do not enable

[Programme and monitoring staff to gather information on resilience] systematically or effectively”³.

Evaluation criterion 3: Efficiency

20. The lack of access to disaggregated financial data has limited the ability of the evaluation to analyze the efficiency of the Programme across the four pillars. Examples of positive measures to increase efficiency were found, but there is no evidence of an overarching strategy for managing efficiency. A range of factors were found to negatively influence efficiency including predominantly short-term FLAs resulting from the annual funding cycle; the administrative burden of reporting on CPs; data errors in cash payment processes linked to manual data collection and Excel-based management of records.

Evaluation criteria 4 and 5: Impact and Sustainability

21. The limited primary and secondary data available on outcomes has constrained the ability of the evaluation to answer questions on impact and sustainability.
22. Primary data collected by the evaluation indicate that increases in agricultural productivity might have occurred, but attribution to the Programme is difficult; secondary data is not available as this is not an outcome that the Programme monitors. The sustainability potential of assets created was found to be linked to interest, capacity and willingness of local authorities, which varied greatly from place to place. Examples of activities focused on improving market linkages and developing value chains were observed, but design and implementation are challenged by the short-term nature of donor funding.
23. Programme participation and cash injections for the duration of activities had positive effects on the well-being and self-esteem of participants, for Syrian women in particular. Participation also facilitated positive interaction between Syrian and Lebanese which can be seen as a positive contribution towards social cohesion. With competition for jobs a key source of tension in this context, the evaluation highlighted the risk that Programme activities seeking to enhance employment opportunities might further fuel social tensions. Whether social ties developed as a result of joint participation in Programme activities will be sustained over time remains an open question. A weak link between enhancing social interaction and its effects on broader perceptions on Syrians was found.
24. The limited primary and secondary data available is a key reason for the mixed results that the evaluation found around the ability of the Programme to enhance employment and economic opportunities. A survey conducted by the CO in 2018 shows that one quarter of participants of digital skills training had found employment. Primary findings however point to only marginal gains in this regard.

³ WFP. Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience. January 2019.

Overall conclusions

25. Overall, the objectives of the Programme are relevant and appropriate and the Programme is strongly aligned with Government strategies and priorities. However, the short-term funding mechanism, the short-term nature of activities and the limited articulation of the ToC and related livelihoods strategy are all negatively affecting the relevance and appropriateness of the Programme. The evaluation has also pointed to a number of programmatic features that could be improved including targeting, analysis and assessments, and better tailoring activities to the different needs of Syrian and Lebanese, men and women.
26. The Programme has delivered its intended outputs. With regards to outcomes monitored, slight improvements in food security and coping strategy indicators for participants were found and the asset base indicator improved significantly between 2017 and 2018. However, the Programme does not disaggregate outcomes for Syrians and Lebanese, does not systematically analyze outcomes by gender or PWD, and does not monitor relevant livelihoods and resilience outcomes. Some examples of efficiency gains were found, but the Programme lacks a systematic cost efficiency analysis and an overarching strategy for managing efficiency.
27. Programme participation and cash injections for the duration of activities had positive effects on participants well-being and self-esteem and positively increased interaction between Syrians and Lebanese. Mixed results were found in relation to greater employment opportunities as result of participation in the Programme. Support to market linkages and development of value chains was challenged by the short-term nature of the funding.

Recommendations

28. The findings and conclusions of this evaluation led to the Evaluation Team making the following five recommendations. Additional details on each recommendation are provided in section 3.2.
 - **Recommendation 1:** In collaboration with FOs and CPs and with support from RBC and HQ, the CO should review the Programme ToC to more clearly articulate the vision for change that the Programme seeks to bring about, its livelihoods and resilience objectives, and the logical sequence between outputs, outcomes and impact.
 - **Recommendation 2:** In collaboration with FOs and CPs and with support from RBC and HQ, the CO should update the current livelihoods strategy to operationalize the revised ToC, specifically focusing on conceptualizing resilience, outlining the programmatic and targeting approach, and the engagement with CPs.
 - **Recommendation 3:** The CO should expand and improve the current monitoring and reporting framework as well as the data collected and analyzed by the Programme to ensure a more robust monitoring of results and strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

- **Recommendation 4:** The CO and FOs should redress the programmatic weaknesses identified by the evaluation with a view of improving the overall quality and effectiveness of the Programme by addressing gaps in assessment and analysis and corporate guidance for FFT activities.
- **Recommendation 5:** The CO should work with the donor and HQ to improve the predictability and duration of funding and adjust internal procedures to the extent possible to enable a longer-term programme implementation approach.

1. Introduction

1. This evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Lebanon Country Office (CO) to produce evidence from the design and implementation of the livelihoods and resilience programme (“the Programme”) targeting displaced Syrians and Lebanese host communities in Lebanon. It is an activity evaluation covering the period between August 2016 to April 2019. The evaluation itself was conducted between June and December 2019.
2. This evaluation is the first decentralized evaluation of livelihoods and resilience conducted among the countries covered by the Cairo Regional Bureau (RBC). Both the CO and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the Government of Germany, the sole donor of the programme, are interested in an evaluation to assess performance, provide lessons learned and suggest recommendations on ways forward. This evaluation also presents an opportunity for WFP as a whole to learn from outcomes of a livelihoods and resilience programme implemented within a large-scale refugee operation in a middle-income country.
3. The the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of the evaluation are related to learning and accountability:
 - Learning, to provide evidence-based findings on Programme achievements to date and areas for improvement to inform operational and strategic decision-making in Lebanon and in other WFP country contexts.
 - Accountability, to contribute to the discussion on WFP strategic and operational direction within the country and meet the demand for donor accountability, publicly shared information and stakeholder involvement.
4. Gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) and accountability to affected populations (AAP) are cross-cutting themes.
5. The evaluation was designed to answer the evaluation questions from the Terms of Reference (ToR) (Annex 1); which were further developed in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2). The evaluation questions correspond to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria and can be summarized as follows:
 - How relevant and appropriate is the Programme?
 - How effective is the Programme?
 - How efficient is the Programme?
 - What are the main impacts⁴ of the Programme and are they sustainable?
6. A list of the main stakeholders interviewed can be found in Annex 4. The primary intended users of the evaluation findings and recommendations are:
 - The CO and Field Offices (FO) which are expected to use the evaluation findings alongside other sources of information to guide future programme design and implementation.

⁴ As discussed, and agreed with the CO, the evaluation did not follow an impact evaluation design. The impact criterion in this report is interpreted to mean the outcomes and effects of the Programme.

- The RBC which may use the evaluation findings to providing strategic guidance, programme support, and oversight to Lebanon and other COs.
- WFP Headquarters (HQ) for wider organizational learning and accountability purposes.
- The HQ Office of Evaluation (OEV), which may use the evaluation findings to feed into evaluation syntheses and into annual reports to the Executive Board.

1.1. Overview of the Programme in Lebanon

7. The Programme provides livelihoods support to Syrians and Lebanese through a package of activities, grouped into the following two main categories, intended to achieve short- and long-term objectives within the WFP food security mandate.
 - **Food Assistance for Training (FFT) or Individual capacity strengthening activities⁵ (Country Strategic Programme – CSP Activity 3).** Short-term trainings are delivered to both vulnerable displaced Syrians and Lebanese Programme participants on a wide array of topics including digital skills, agricultural practices, accountancy, life skills, and others (see Annexes 6 and 8). The long-term objective is to equip female and male participants with marketable skills to enhance their income opportunities in Lebanon and, for displaced Syrians, in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) once they return⁶.
 - **Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) or Asset creation and livelihood support activities (CSP Activity 4).** Community assets (e.g. irrigation canals, market sites, forests) are established or rehabilitated by Programme participants through short-term temporary work⁷. Multiple long-term objectives include improving living conditions, stimulating local economic opportunities, enhancing resilience, and strengthening social cohesion.
8. Both FFA and FFT activities use conditional food assistance delivered through cash-based transfers (CBT) to meet short-term food security objectives. The transfer of USD 200 (LBP 300,000) is intended as remuneration or incentive for participation and is calculated to fill the monthly household food gap⁸. Syrian and Lebanese participate for a maximum of 60 hours per month and receive a transfer of minimum USD 20 (LBP 30,000) per day⁹.
9. Using the same payment mechanism to deliver cash and food assistance to vulnerable Syrians targeted under CSP Strategic Outcome (SO) 1, the Programme cash transfer is delivered via ATM debit cards. For Syrian participants who are also beneficiaries of WFP

⁵ The terms FFT and FFA are used in this report to refer to 'Individual capacity strengthening' and to 'Asset creation and livelihood support' activities that the CO implements using Cash-Based Transfers (CBTs). This report recognises that some 'Asset creation' activities are implemented through contractors, rather than through CBTs. Activities implemented through contractors have not been included in this evaluation.

⁶ See WFP Lebanon, Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2018-2020.

⁷ FFA activities also embed a training component on topics that are relevant to the work or the asset established, such as health and safety training or maintenance of the asset (e.g. pruning and thinning for reforestation).

⁸ The cash transfer value calculation includes transportation costs of USD 5 per day (WFP Lebanon, Livelihoods Programme Guideline for determining the cash transfer value for FFA/FFT. 15 January 2018), and is aligned with the Standard Operating Procedures for Cash for Work developed by the Lebanon inter-agency Livelihoods sector.

⁹ At a rate of USD 3.33 per hour for a minimum of six hours per day.

cash and food assistance under SO 1, the transfer is loaded on the debit cards that they already have. The CO distributes new debit cards to deliver the cash transfer to both Syrian participants who are not assisted under SO 1 and to Lebanese participants.

10. To facilitate monitoring and reporting in 2018 the CO split FFA and FFT activities into four pillars along Programme focus areas: Pillar 1: Skills and vocational trainings, value chain development, market linkages; Pillar 2: Rehabilitation/construction of small-scale agriculture infrastructure; Pillar 3: Reforestation and forest management activities; Pillar 4: Construction/rehabilitation of farmers' markets¹⁰ (see also reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) in Annex 13).
11. The Programme seeks to mainstream gender and disability concerns into its activities and to ensure equitable participation of men and women (50% male and 50% female) and of persons with disabilities (PWD)¹¹. According to Programme documents, special provisions should be put in place to facilitate the involvement of women or PWD, such as the provision of childcare and flexibility of working hours¹².
12. Since the start of the Programme the CO has collaborated with a range of national and international partners. National and international Cooperating Partners (CP) are directly involved in the Programme and responsible for designing activities, targeting and monitoring progress following written and verbal guidance provided by FOs and the CO. The list of CPs as included in the ToR is found in Annex 8. The Programme is aligned with the priorities of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), the Government of Lebanon's four-year strategy of response to the Syrian crisis. The CO is actively engaged in the LCRP inter-agency coordination mechanism: together with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the CO and FAO co-chair the Food Security and Agricultural sector, and the CO is a member of the Livelihoods Core Group sector¹³.
13. The Programme started in 2016 as a pilot following the commitments made at the 2016 "Supporting Syria and the Region" London conference¹⁴. Since 2017 the Programme has scaled up the size of support spanning three planning frameworks: the EMOP 200433 (2012-2016), the PRRO 200987 (2017), and the CSP (2018-2020). The objectives, outputs and outcomes of the Programme have evolved throughout its implementation to reflect a gradual shift in the strategic and programmatic approach as the crisis has become

¹⁰ More recently the CO has re-grouped Programme activities under different pillars. However, in line with the ToR and discussions with Evaluation Managers, this evaluation uses the above four pillars referring to activities either as falling under each Pillar or under FFA or FFT.

¹¹ Country Strategic Plan, Lebanon CO, 8 June 2017; Lebanon FFA Implementation Manual, 2017; FFT and FFA Calls for Expressions of Interests of various years.

¹² WFP Lebanon, CSP 2018-2020; Lebanon FFA Implementation Manual, 2017; FFA and FFT Expressions of Interests.

¹³ Under the same coordination mechanism, UNDP chairs the Livelihoods sector together with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the Ministry of Economy and Trade.

¹⁴ At the "Supporting Syria and the Region 2016" conference held in London in February 2016 international actors committed to a new approach to respond to the protracted displacement crisis, including the creation of economic opportunities in countries hosting displaced Syrians in the region. See Co-hosts Declaration of the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference, London 2016.

increasingly protracted (see Annex 7). The analysis of planned and actual outputs, outcomes and participant numbers is included in section 2.4.

14. The CSP outlines Programme participation targets as follows: 1,200 in 2018 and 8,616 in 2019 for FFT activities; 12,750 in 2018 and 3,883 in 2019 for FFA activities¹⁵. In 2019, financial resources for FFT activities were 739,574 USD and 1,066,972 USD for FFA activities. The resource requirements, contributions received, budget allocated and revisions spanning the EMOP 200433, PRRO 200987 and CSP are presented in Annex 17. A background on the country context is found in Annex 10.

1.2. Evaluation Methodology and Limitations

15. The evaluation was designed to assess the Programme against the following evaluation criteria: Relevance and Appropriateness, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. The main evaluation questions are included in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 2). During the inception phase the Evaluation Team discussed with the CO the inclusion of three additional evaluation questions on gender, AAP, and partnerships. Upon request by the CO, these issues were treated in the methodology as cross-cutting, rather than as stand-alone questions¹⁶. The Humanitarian Principles¹⁷ of Humanity, Neutrality, Independence, and Impartiality were not explicitly included in the evaluation questions. However, the Evaluation Team took these into account; all team members have considerable experience of working in emergency contexts and operating in accordance with the Principles.
16. The evaluation methodology employed a non-experimental theory-based approach with adapted contribution analysis and elements of outcome harvesting. The Evaluation Team developed a reconstructed ToC (see Annex 13) by drawing on the log frames in place since 2016 (see Annex 7), available Programme documents, and inception phase interviews. The ToC sought to explicitly map out the logical sequence of the Programme while also articulating the underlying (and also reconstructed) assumptions across the chain of results. A detailed description of the methodology is found in Annex 14.
17. The Evaluation Team also developed an evaluation matrix, which contained an extensive list of indicators and measures of progress (see Annex 2). The evaluation methodology centered around the evaluation matrix and the ToC as the two key references for all stages of inquiry and analysis. Data collection tools were oriented to inform responses to the criteria questions and indicators contained within the evaluation matrix.
18. The evaluation followed a mixed-methods approach by collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary sources. Existing secondary sources were reviewed, including Programme documents, relevant

¹⁵ Corresponding to 6,000 beneficiaries in 2018, and 43,080 beneficiaries in 2019 with FFT activities; with FFA activities, the CSP aimed to reach 63,750 beneficiaries in 2018 and 19,415 in 2019.

¹⁶ One reason for this request by the CO is the recent "Inclusion Study" focusing on gender and protection that the AAP unit conducted at the same time as the inception phase for this evaluation (see section 2.2).

¹⁷ WFP (2004) Humanitarian Principles: WFP/EB.A/2004/5-C.

assessments, monitoring and evaluation reports, and data sets that the CO shared with the Evaluation Team. In total, over 200 documents were reviewed (see Annex 3).

19. The final annual reports (specifically sections outlining successes, challenges and lessons learned) of the CPs that were not part of the data collection sample (see Annex 6 and 8), were coded and analyzed using qualitative data analysis software, Dedoose. In addition, quantitative data, including Programme participants and baseline and outcome monitoring, were reviewed and additional analysis was undertaken when possible.
20. New primary data was collected using semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Key informants included WFP, CPs, the donor, UN agencies, local and international NGOs, as well as government agencies and Municipalities to establish a deeper understanding of the effects of the Programme and factors explaining results. In total, 72 key informants were interviewed. 28 FGDs were organized in locations derived from purposive sampling to cover different groups of Programme participants and a small number of non-participating community members. In total, 190 people (102 women and 88 men) took part in FGDs in various locations across the country (see Annex 12).
21. Gender dimensions were explicitly incorporated into the scope of the evaluation and the methodology, with associated indicators for most evaluation sub-questions. Wherever feasible, analysis of quantitative and narrative analysis of primary and secondary data was disaggregated by the gender of participants and, in some cases, the gender of the household head. FGDs were held separately with men and women as well as Syrian and Lebanese participants in all locations.
22. The ethical issues that were considered by the Evaluation Team for the design, data collection, data analysis and the safeguards and measures to manage these issues are outlined in Annex 9. No ethical issues had been identified or anticipated in the ToR.
23. **Limitations** - The CO shared a wealth of resources with the Evaluation Team. However, important limitations related to quality, completeness and coherence of data and reports and weaknesses of the Programme monitoring framework were observed during the inception and report writing phases. These included: lack of cost data disaggregated by specific activity or pillar; limited disaggregated registration information by the sex of participants and of the head of households; lack of disaggregated analysis of outcomes by status (Lebanese vs. Syrian), gender, and PWD. (see Annex 14 for a detailed overview of limitations).
24. To the extent possible, given these limitations, triangulated analysis results across primary and secondary data sources have been presented in this report to ensure robustness and credibility of findings. Internal and external quality assurance mechanisms were also used to enhance the credibility of the evaluation findings (see Annex 14).
25. Ultimately however, the ability of the Evaluation Team to use existing Programme secondary data in conjunction with primary data collected has been greatly limited by these weaknesses. In turn, this has affected the ability to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the evaluation criteria under analysis and to more robustly answer the

evaluation questions. A key limitation of this report is that the findings presented rely heavily on the qualitative primary information that have been gathered from the limited sample of Programme activities and participants selected for data collection (see Annex 14 for a more detailed discussion of limitations).

26. The lack of a definition of resilience and the absence of a framework to monitor resilience results constrained the ability of this evaluation to retrospectively assess resilience-building outcomes of the Programme. To answer evaluation questions related to aspects of resilience - particularly on impact, social cohesion and sustainability - the evaluation drew upon the 'Resilience Lens' developed as part of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) plan in 2016¹⁸ and used it as guidance¹⁹.
27. The extended scope covered by the evaluation (more than three years), combined with the high turnover of staff and of the Head of the Livelihoods unit at the CO in particular, limited the memory recall of some interviewees. The Evaluation Team mitigated this by reaching out to previous post-holders in some cases and relying on earlier documentation to fill gaps, where available.

2. Evaluation Findings

28. The evaluation findings and the evidence to substantiate them are presented below. They are structured as a response to each evaluation question in turn.

2.1. Evaluation Question 1 - Relevance and Appropriateness

- *Were the livelihood project activities relevant to the challenges Lebanon faces nationally and in light of the displacement crisis?*
29. For decades Lebanon has been confronted with multiple challenges emanating from structural macroeconomic failures and social-related factors, which have been exacerbated by the negative impact of the influx of displaced Syrians into the country for nearly a decade (see Annex 10). The Government of Lebanon's four-year strategy of response to the Syrian crisis, developed under the leadership of MoSA in collaboration with national and international partners, is outlined in the LCRP. Articulated around four objectives²⁰ the strategy combines a dual focus on humanitarian assistance and support to recovery, social stability and longer-term development strategies.

¹⁸ The three dimensions of resilience that form the Resilience Lens are: (i) strengthen national/local capacities and institutions, (ii) contribute to sustainable benefits, and (iii) contribute to social cohesion. The State of Resilience Programming. The Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States Sub-regional Response Facility (Syria Crisis) Amman, Jordan. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/UNDP_Resilience-3RP_final-lowres.pdf

¹⁹ As discussed in the 3RP Resilience Lens documentation, "in its current form, the Resilience Lens cannot be used as a measure of progress. (Ibid. p. 10)

²⁰ The LCRP four strategic objectives are: 1) ensure the protection of vulnerable populations; 2) provide immediate assistance to vulnerable populations; 3) support service provision through national systems; 4) reinforce Lebanon's economic, social and environmental stability.

30. Complementing humanitarian assistance to mitigate the negative effects of the protracted crisis with strategies of intervention, such as supporting livelihoods and building resilience, was seen by all stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation to be of critical importance for the country at this juncture. That said, many concurred that the humanitarian response continued to be characterized by short-term emergency approaches and sectoral siloed programming. Several interviewees noted that the LCRP inter-agency coordination mechanism (see section 1.1) was offering limited coordination potential in the protracted crisis context. On the one hand, its structure, divided along sectoral responses and coordination mechanisms, contributed to reinforcing siloed programming rather than bolstering more joined-up approaches among humanitarian and development actors. On the other hand, overlapping objectives, activities and indicators were unhelpfully co-existing under its umbrella, namely between the Food Security and Agricultural sector, co-chaired by the CO and where the results of the Programme are reported to - and the Livelihoods sector²¹.
31. Positive perceptions were expressed by a number of key stakeholders interviewed on the well-established role of the CO as a major cash actor and key responder to the basic needs of displaced Syrians in the country. Indeed, since 2012 the CO has injected a staggering USD 1.3 billion into the Lebanese economy through its retail network of 450 contracted shops where displaced Syrians reached under SO 1 redeem their food e-vouchers²². In addition to its established reputation in-country and cash expertise, the CO was also seen by some as pioneering the combination of a large-scale humanitarian cash operation with the provision of longer-term livelihoods and resilience support, the latter through the Programme under analysis.

“WFP is the only agency in the country that has a big cash assistance programme and a livelihoods programme. WFP is one step ahead of other agencies as it is working on both humanitarian assistance and livelihoods activities”. – UN agency representative

32. Against this background, initiatives such as the Programme that aim to improve the livelihoods and build the resilience of displaced Syrians and Lebanese host communities are clearly relevant and appropriate. Resilience and livelihoods programming in protracted crisis contexts inherently entails a long-term vision and a set of activities designed and implemented to match this vision²³. Despite its stated focus on livelihoods strengthening and resilience-building however, the Programme is underpinned by a loosely defined approach that largely relies on short-term activities. Indeed, a leitmotiv of all FGDs conducted for this evaluation with Programme participants and confirmed in several interviews with CPs, was the short duration of activities (see also section 2.6) in some cases consisting of only a few days. One FFT activity sampled for data collection entailed a one-

²¹ LCRP 2017-2020 (2019 Update).

²² WFP Lebanon, Annual Country Report 2018.

²³ See Levine, S. and I. Mosel “Supporting resilience in difficult places A critical look at applying the ‘resilience’ concept in countries where crises are the norm” HPG Commissioned Report. March 2014; DFID “Saving lives, building resilience, reforming the system: the UK Government’s Humanitarian Reform Policy”. September 2017.

off training on climate-smart agricultural skills and was delivered over the course of only eight days for which participants received a one-off cash transfer of USD 160 (AUB (ESDU) and CWB, see Annex 6). Short-term initiatives can be seen temporary measures that provide short-term cash injections but their contribution to resilience-building is ultimately questionable.

33. The short-term nature of donor funding (see also section 2.6) was consistently indicated by CO staff interviewed as a key challenge to the adoption of longer-term planning and implementation approaches that could better support the Programme's stated objectives and more meaningfully address the challenges faced by Lebanon and its residents today. Notwithstanding the real strategic and programmatic constraints arising from the short-term nature of funding, this evaluation has observed a number of factors related to the design of the Programme that were found to limit its ability to more appropriately and effectively translate its livelihoods and resilience-building goals in practice. Programme documents, including the 2018 livelihoods strategy and the ToC which was developed in 2018 and revisited in 2019, do not clearly outline the thinking behind the design and choice of Programme activities. Also, they do not make explicit the underlying assumptions and contextual factors that influence results, and the lasting change the Programme expects to bring about for Syrians and Lebanese, particularly considering the different drivers of vulnerability of these two populations, as elaborated in section 2.2.
34. As it stands, the Programme relies on a substantial set of implicit assumptions: it implements a wide range of different FFA and FFT activities, each one bringing a whole host of assumptions, and all resting under the overall assumption that these activities will lead to resilience (though resilience is not conceptualized in any of the documents).
35. For example, for training courses to be appropriate and relevant they should aim to teach or reinforce a skill or knowledge, underpinned by the recognition of a gap in this regard – either because there is evidence that people do not know what they are being taught or the Programme assumes that, if people are not doing something, it must be because they do not know (outputs and assumptions). Participants would then have to put the learning acquired from training courses into practice: it should fit in with their lives, their workloads, their future prospects, etc. (outcomes). Eventually the skills and competencies acquired should lead to greater employment or self-employment, either in Lebanon or, for displaced Syrians in Syria upon eventual return (impact).
36. In line with the example above, each link of the logical sequence (outputs, outcomes, impact) would benefit from being unpacked to see what the original assumptions were, what evidence they were based on and what the evidence from the monitoring framework says about how well they have been proven in reality. As discussed in section 2.4 and Annex 14, the Programme lacks this kind of analysis and the current monitoring framework is not conducive to support it with evidence on relevant outcomes.

Key findings - Question 1

- The Programme objectives of strengthening livelihoods and building resilience are relevant and appropriate to address the multiple challenges that Lebanon is faced with today.
- Given its role as a major cash actor and key responder to the needs of displaced Syrians, the CO has gained a credible reputation in country and is well-placed to complement its large-scale cash response with livelihoods support and resilience-building.
- The short-term nature of donor funding is not conducive to support longer-term approaches that are at the core of a resilience-building agenda and which could better enable the Programme to reach its stated objectives.
- The ToC and related livelihoods strategy are not clearly elaborated. Underlying assumptions and contextual factors influencing results as well as the change that the Programme ultimately seeks to bring about for Syrians and Lebanese are also not clearly spelled out.

2.2. Evaluation Question 2 - Relevance and Appropriateness

- *Were the activities chosen appropriate for, and supportive of, the participants and communities served?*

Targeting

37. The Programme seeks to target the most vulnerable and food insecure displaced Syrians registered with UNHCR, and vulnerable Lebanese as follows:

- **Syrians:** Since 2018, first priority has been given to people unassisted under SO 1 and below the Survival and Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB); second priority to those between SMEB and Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB); and third priority to those below SMEB who are receiving food e-vouchers (see Annex 11).
- **Lebanese:** Beneficiaries of the Emergency National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP)²⁴, but not necessarily targeted under SO 3²⁵ and vulnerable Lebanese not included in the NPTP reached through outreach activities and self-referrals.

38. As explained during interviews, the rationale underpinning targeting of Syrian participants is linked to the fact that thousands of severely vulnerable households living below the SMEB – amounting to 485,331 individuals (97,066 households) according to the Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR)- are not benefiting from food e-vouchers or cash transfers (under SO 1) because of funding gaps. In the words of a CO staff, “the Programme is a cushion for beneficiaries that we cannot reach with food assistance... it allows us to capture those families”.

39. This evaluation however questions whether this targeting approach is suited to reach the Programme’s stated livelihoods and resilience-building objectives. There is growing evidence in both humanitarian and development contexts indicating that combining cash and voucher assistance with sectoral interventions, such as livelihoods, but also health,

²⁴ The NPTP is Lebanon’s main non-contributory social protection programme.

²⁵ Through CSP SO 3, the CO supports the Government of Lebanon to expand its NPTP coverage by providing cash-based transfers to NPTP beneficiaries.

shelter, education, and other, can positively contribute to maximizing sectoral outcomes²⁶. Re-thinking the prioritization approach so that the Programme targets Syrian beneficiaries reached under SO 1 and Lebanese NPTP beneficiaries reached under SO 3 could better harness the potential of combining cash with livelihoods support, with multiplier effects on food security, enhanced economic and productive opportunities (e.g. facilitate investments in small businesses, purchase of productive assets and enable work on own land, particularly for Lebanese), and ultimately resilience-building.

40. During interviews with CPs, the Evaluation Team often observed confusion and lack of understanding of the rationale underpinning the Programme targeting approach, and at times of the overall objectives of activities. The great majority of FGDs with Lebanese and Syrian participants in different locations also pointed to lack of clarity and general confusion about who is targeted and why. CPs are the first port of call for participants' complaints on the Programme. During interviews they often noted the serious difficulties that they faced in addressing community and participants' complaints around targeting and inclusion, which were further accentuated by the fact that CP staff themselves lacked clarity on who should be included in Programme activities and why.
41. In interviews, several CO, FO and CP staff also noted a range of problems related to NPTP beneficiaries' lists, such as being outdated and having high levels of inclusion and exclusion errors. In turn, NPTP lists were found to be of limited use and for the most part CPs relied on outreach and self-referrals followed by a vulnerability assessment developed by the CO to target vulnerable Lebanese. In interviews as well as in final reports, several CPs noted problems related to interference in the targeting process by local authorities, such as Municipality actors, who often provided suggestions - or "*pressured*", as one CP report indicates, CPs to include Lebanese with whom they had connections with (see section 2.7).

Assessments, analysis and community consultations

42. Since its inception in 2016, the Programme used a range of tools to identify vulnerable localities for implementation, including the VASyR, the 2015 "Inter-Agency Map of the Most Vulnerable Localities in Lebanon" (also called the 251 map), and proportion of NPTP beneficiaries. In 2016 and until the end of 2018, the identification of localities for Programme implementation, FFAs in particular, as well as community consultations for selection of activities were largely conducted by CPs in collaboration with local authorities.
43. Increasingly cognizant of the potential for interference and of the negative consequences on the impartial delivery of livelihoods support as a result, at the end of 2018 the CO stepped up its involvement in this process. This included greater involvement of FOs in the identification of vulnerable localities for implementation of FFAs, the use of UNDP-led

²⁶ Harvey, P. and Pavanello, S. (2018). *Multi-purpose cash and sectorial outcomes, a review of evidence and learning*, UNHCR Global Cash Operations; Roelen, K., Devereux, S., Abdulai, A.G., Martorano, B., Palermo, T. and Ragno, L. P. (2017). *How to Make 'Cash Plus' Work: Linking Cash Transfers to Services and Sectors*, Innocenti. Working Paper 2017-10, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence; FAO (2017) *Combined effects and synergies between agricultural and social protection interventions: what is the evidence so far?* Rome, FAO.

Mapping of Risk and Resources (MRR)²⁷ plans and of CO-led Community-Based Participatory Planning processes to consult communities in some localities.

44. Some CO and FO staff interviewed felt that greater involvement in these processes was positive. As summarized by one CO staff: *"Now we have a much better understanding of the needs on the ground and of the local context."* Some FGD discussions however indicated that, even if more consultative and community-centered approaches are used, participants did not feel included in the design of Programme activities. When asked whether they had participated in any consultations, such as which assets should be rehabilitated and where, FGDs participants in the localities visited during data collection widely stated that they had not. According to FGD findings, CPs and/or the Municipality typically *"announced the project"* as many described this process, with the type of activity, location, number of beneficiaries, and other design and implementation aspects all being decided and defined. The above perceptions of participants interviewed are not representative of the entire Programme, and this evaluation recognizes that only a limited number of participants and community members were inevitably included in these consultations.
45. With regards to FFT activities and topics of training in particular, the evaluation did not find their identification to be premised on country-wide labor market assessments in Lebanon and in Syria and in turn on a robust understanding of labor gaps and needs in these two contexts. This is linked to a dearth of statistical data in this regard, something that a number of key informants were keen to highlight as a challenge to virtually any type of programming in Lebanon. For example, in early 2018 the Central Administration of Statistics with support from ILO launched a national labor force survey. The publication of results however continues to be delayed due to difficulties in obtaining approval from higher national policy levels.
46. Similarly, interviews pointed to the lack of labor market data for Syria. This is relevant to consider since FFT activities aim to equip Syrians with marketable skills to also enhance their employment opportunities upon return (see section 1.1). Some CO staff expressed intentions to start liaising with WFP Syria CO to better understand existing and, potential future labor market gaps, but until now this has not happened.
47. In the absence of labor market data and analysis on both countries, the identification of training topics is largely decided by CPs. To compensate for this limitation, in 2017 and 2018, available market assessments conducted by other agencies such as UNDP/UNHCR²⁸ and DRC²⁹ were consulted by the CO and FOs. In addition, the CO increasingly requests evidence (e.g. in CP project proposals) on the link between proposed topics and market needs. This is clearly positive and denotes attention to ensuring that the skills gained can

²⁷ The Maps of Risks and Resources (MRR) is a UNDP-led conflict sensitive needs assessment methodology that since 2017 has been implemented in several Municipalities across the country to facilitate the dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders at local level to identify and prioritize risks, needs and resources, and identify possible responses (Lebanon FFA Implementation Manual, 2017).

²⁸ UNDP and UNHCR (2018) The Aarsal Labour Market Assessment (ALMA)

²⁹ DRC (2018) Rapid Market Assessment & Skills Gap Analysis: Aarsal – "The Hidden Town", March 2018

actually be of practical use to ultimately enhance self-employment or employability of participants.

48. This evaluation nonetheless found that in some cases training topics and local market demands were not aligned. For example, interviews with CPs and FGDs indicated that in some locations the agricultural and construction sectors³⁰ are becoming increasingly saturated with seasonal and short-term unskilled laborers. In turn, some interviewees questioned the relevance of courses delivered in agricultural practices, particularly when trainings are basic and consisting of a one-off course delivered over a few days. Furthermore, some of the training topics, such as photography and floriculture (see Annex 6), appear to have limited relevance in supporting job opportunities or self-employment of vulnerable Syrians and Lebanese in the locations visited.
49. One of the three dimensions of the Resilience Lens is “contribution to social cohesion” and two of the six components of this dimension are “conflict-risk analysis” and “conflict-sensitive design”³¹. While one of the objectives of the Programme is to strengthen social cohesion, this evaluation found that no conflict-sensitive assessment was systematically conducted by CO, FO or CPs before the roll out of all Programme activities³². As further elaborated in section 2.7, this type of analysis is of particular relevance in this context and to enable a deeper and contextualized understanding of the extent of tensions between Syrians and Lebanese in a given area, of the underpinning reasons of such tensions and, critically, of the potential risks for exacerbation that could result from livelihoods support and asset creation.

Vulnerability

50. This evaluation found that the choice of Programme activities was not always consistent with understandings of existing vulnerabilities linked to status (Syrian/Lebanese), area of residence (rural/urban), gender and disability in this context.
51. **Status** - A common message arising from all FGDs was that securing a job was a major challenge for all and a key reason for struggling to make ends meet. Like their Lebanese counterparts, Syrians were confronted with high levels of unemployment in the country. Their labor market participation however was further hindered by their displaced status and the constraints emanating from national legal and policy frameworks governing their access to jobs (see Annex 10). Also linked to their displacement experience, Syrians had suffered the loss of social networks that could support them in finding employment - even if casual and temporary - as well as the loss of productive assets such as land and had virtually non-existent credit worthiness³³. As such, while the symptoms in this context

³⁰ Legal employment for displaced Syrians in Lebanon is restricted to “third sector jobs” in construction, agriculture and waste management services only (see Annex 10).

³¹ The Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States Sub-regional Response Facility (Syria Crisis) Amman, Jordan. p. 14
https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/UNDP_Resilience-3RP_final-lowres.pdf

³² A one-off social cohesion survey was conducted in 2018, see Annex 14. In early 2019 some CO Programme staff also attended a training course on conflict sensitivity delivered by the UNDP-led Stabilization sector in early 2019.

³³ See also LCRP 2019 Update.

unemployment are similar, the underlying drivers of economic vulnerability of Syrian and of Lebanese are different.

52. Resilience programming can offer a useful foundation to address both immediate symptoms and underlying structural causes of vulnerability to enable at-risk populations to better withstand shocks. To do this however, resilience-building interventions such as the Programme under analysis need to be premised on a clear analysis of exactly which pressures, shocks and crises different at-risk populations - in this case Syrian and Lebanese - are confronted with and what responses are best suited to address them. In other words, this analysis should usefully articulate 'resilience to what?' and of the different interventions that can build resilience in this context. This type of analysis however is missing in Programme documents, including in the Livelihoods Strategy and related 2018 and 2019 TOCs³⁴ (see also section 2.1).
53. Interviews with CO, FO and CP staff all revealed strong awareness and robust understanding of the different pressures, stresses and shocks that displaced Syrians face when it comes to accessing job opportunities in Lebanon. This understanding however was not found to have been translated into the development of a bifurcated strategy and programmatic approach, premised on the articulation of 'resilience to what?', to more appropriately tailor FFT and FFA activities to the different needs but also abilities, ambitions and future prospects of Syrian and Lebanese people.
54. The difficulties that the Programme faces in enrolling and retaining Lebanese participants, as frequently explained in interviews and in CP reports, provides a useful example in this regard. Table 1 shows that in 2017 and 2018 the Programme enrolled a higher number of Syrians than Lebanese. As the quote from one CP final report illustrates and as also noted by one CP interview, because of entrenched cultural norms most Lebanese considered unskilled labor, for example to rehabilitate community assets (forestry or agricultural), to be menial and "*beneath them*". Furthermore, the short duration of Programme activities for a few days a month further contributed to making the labor opportunities offered through the FFA activities unattractive and for the most part not aligned with the needs and expectations of Lebanese. This was especially the case for Lebanese men for whom the Programme ultimately offered employment opportunities of last resort. They would either not join the Programme in the first place, join only if no other opportunities were available (e.g. in particularly vulnerable localities or in winter when availability of agricultural labor is particularly scarce) or drop out as soon as other openings became available.

"Most of Lebanese...were not interested in participating, especially in FFA activities. Some expressed being unsatisfied with the incentive value, the type of work where they lack expertise in construction and are more involved in agriculture, and the short-term employment."

³⁴ WFP Lebanon Draft 2019/2020 Livelihood Strategy, ToC 2018 and 2019 (internal documents).

Table 1: Proportion of Syrian vs Lebanon participants in years 2017-2019

	2017	2018	2019
Lebanese	41%	45%	51%
Syrians	59%	55%	49%

Source: WFP Participants data

55. **Area of residence** – Displaced Syrians have taken up residence in rural, urban and peri-urban areas across the country. The greatest majority of displaced Syrians are concentrated in northern Lebanon and in the Bekaa valley where agriculture is contributing up to 80 percent of the local GDP and is by far the most important source of income for poor Lebanese and Syrians³⁵ (see Annex 10). Programme activities are in turn predominantly focused on supporting rural livelihoods and this evaluation finds this focus appropriate.
56. That said, it is important to also note that displaced Syrians have also taken up residence in disadvantaged urban and peri-urban neighborhoods across the country, with one out of five displaced Syrians living in Lebanon estimated to be residing in urban areas³⁶. Despite the fact that a high proportion of Syrians also live in urban areas, humanitarian actors have struggled to reach them. There are a number of reasons for this, including the difficulties in identifying and locating them as they live scattered among the rest of the urban population, a dearth of data, and limited availability of NGOs to partner with who have experience in urban areas³⁷. These challenges were echoed in interviews with CO staff who also recognized that the Programme has struggled to realize its ambition to engage more prominently in urban areas and tailor Programme activities to the needs of urban populations³⁸.
57. This was confirmed by this evaluation, which found that the portfolio of activities targeted to urban livelihoods was limited. Except for some trainings implemented under Pillar 1, such as digital skills, the bulk of activities across the three other Pillars have been conceived with a “rural lens” in mind. In turn, this makes the bulk of Programme activities less appropriate to respond to the needs of the growing Lebanese urban population (see Annex 10) and to the needs of the thousands of Syrians who have taken up residence in the cities and towns of Lebanon.

³⁵ FAO Lebanon. Plan of Action for Resilient Livelihoods 2014-2018. Addressing the Impact of the Syria Crisis & Food Security Response and Stabilization of Rural Livelihoods.

³⁶ LCRP 2019 Update.

³⁷ LCRP 2019 Update.

³⁸ See for example WFP Lebanon, CSP 2018-2020 p. 12: “WFP will provide conditional food assistance as an incentive to vulnerable Lebanese people and Syrian refugees to enhance their income opportunities, livelihoods and basic life skills, *tailored to both urban and rural contexts* [emphasis added].” Also, a number of internal discussions on the development of a package of activities tailored to urban populations have taken place over the years. More recently in June 2019, the CO held bilateral discussions on urban livelihoods with UNICEF and UN HABITAT and hosted a regional workshop attended by the RBC, other WFP RBC countries, UNDP and UN HABITAT during which one day was dedicated to discussing urban livelihoods.

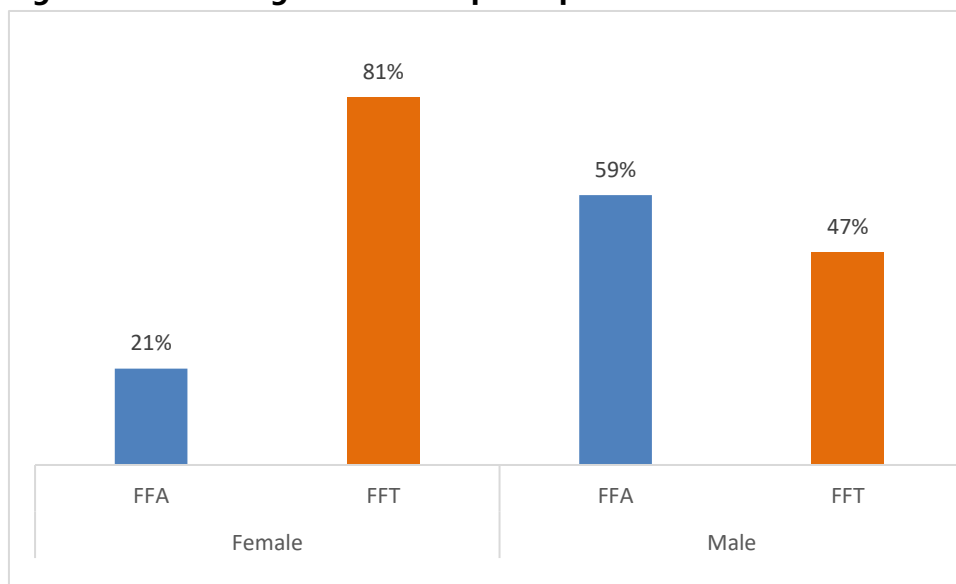
58. **Gender and PWD** – Interviews and CP reports highlighted the challenges that the Programme faces in ensuring participation of women and PWD in FFA activities in particular. This was largely explained as being related to the nature of FFA activities and the heavy physical work involved, which was indicated generally attracting mostly male, able-bodied participants.
59. This has translated into a number of programmatic efforts that the CO has undertaken to ensure that activities are better tailored to and more supportive of the specific needs of women to ensure their greater enrolment and retention. The growing portfolio of FFT³⁹ activities is one example of these efforts. As shown in Table 2, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of participants engaged in FFT activities since 2017 accompanied by a decrease in the percentage of participants engaged in FFA activities. Figure 1 also shows that the percentage of female participants for years 2018-2019 is significantly higher in FFT than FFA activities. The Programme does not collect disability data systematically and therefore it is not possible to carry out a similar analysis for PWD.

Table 2: Proportion of participants engaged in FFA and FFT 2017-2019⁴⁰

	2017	2018	2019 (until April)
FFA	71%	50%	24%
FFT	29%	56%	76%

Source: WFP Participants data

Figure 1: Percentage of female participants in FFA and FFT activities in 2018-19



Source: WFP Participants data

³⁹ Delving into different types of disabilities was beyond the scope of this evaluation. In general, trainings were recognized by key informants as suited to persons with certain disabilities which would not prevent them from attending (e.g. training facilities and curricula still prevent participation of deaf or blind persons).

⁴⁰ If the participant data is accurate, some participants were in both FFA and FFT in 2018 but there was no overlap in 2017 or 2019.

60. Other examples in this regard include initiatives spearheaded by the AAP unit⁴¹ within the CO. An "Inclusion Study"⁴² was recently conducted by the AAP unit to gain a better understanding of and respond to the needs of women and PWD Programme participants. This unit also developed a Gender and Protection Capacity Building Plan to support CPs to better integrate gender and protection in Programme activities.
61. Notwithstanding these positive initiatives, the evaluation found that gaps to ensure enrolment and retention of women and of PWD remained. For example, during fieldwork visits, the Evaluation Team observed that none of the premises where CP offices were located were disabled-friendly (e.g. not equipped with elevators, or elevators were not working). As highlighted above, CPs are the first port of call for participants' complaints on the Programme and disabled-friendly facilities would facilitate the ability of PWD to raise complaints and/or ask for information about the Programme
62. Virtually no childcare facilities were found to be provided by the Programme to facilitate attendance of female participants with children. Similarly, analysis of CPs' reports shows that only one CP provided such facilities to participants and a number of reports highlight a lack of childcare facilities but also of toilets on FFA sites which had led to the drop-out of some female participants.
63. Likewise, during FGDs, many Syrian and Lebanese women said that they knew of other women who had not enrolled and/or had dropped out because they did not know where to leave their children while joining activities. Several also stated that during their participation in the Programme they were constantly worried about their children and some had adopted strategies that could have put their children at risk, such as leaving them at home alone.
64. At times, pre-conceived assumptions and misinterpretations of cultural constructs around what women could or would do in this context were found to be informing the type of activities that were considered appropriate for women. The primary data collected for this evaluation indicated that the great majority of women who had worked in FFA activities had taken great pride in participation but also in the stereotypically 'male' skills that they had gained as a result. Syrian female participants of the rehabilitation of the irrigation canal in Baalbek reported having used the newly acquired cement mixing skills to construct ovens in their homes, which they were using to cook for their families. They also stressed that they believed they would be able to use these skills upon return to Syria, to eventually reconstruct their homes.
65. The 2016 WFP FFA Guidance Manual⁴³ (Corporate Manual) is a 400-page corporate document that provides strategic and technical guidance to WFP staff across all FFA project cycle phases. There is however no WFP corporate manual on FFT, with FFT activities only touched upon and briefly discussed in the Corporate Manual, meaning that FFT activities are developed without benefiting from corporate guidance and input. According

⁴¹ The AAP unit was established within the CO in 2018.

⁴² This study was not shared with the Evaluation Team.

⁴³ WFP. Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) Guidance Manual, 2016.

to CO staff interviewed, the Corporate Manual was the only written technical livelihoods guidance that was used to inform the design of activities in 2016. A number of CO staff interviewed felt that the Corporate Manual was too generic and offered limited applicability in Lebanon, in part because of the large-scale displacement crisis context. In turn, the Corporate Manual was reported as having provided limited support to the design of Programme activities. This finding resonates with the Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience, according to which the Corporate Manual provided “little help when designing and managing resilience interventions” in the context of FFA.⁴⁴

66. Drawing on the Corporate Manual, in 2017 the CO drafted a 30-page Implementation Manual⁴⁵ (Lebanon Manual) for use by CO, FO and CPs staff when designing and implementing FFA activities in the country. A number of interviewees indicated that the Lebanon Manual had afforded a more succinct, useful and context-specific guidance than the Corporate Manual. Some however also noted that the Lebanon Manual lacked much needed practical guidance on how to design and tailor FFA and FFT activities to the needs of women and PWD.

⁴⁴ WFP. Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience. Evaluation Report Volume 1. January 2019, p.29.

⁴⁵ WFP Lebanon, Food for Assets in Lebanon. Implementation manual 2017.

Key findings – Question 2

- The targeting approach does not lend itself well to reaching Programme objectives, limiting the potential that complementary cash and livelihoods programming might have to synergistically strengthen positive food security, livelihoods and resilience outcomes.
- The evaluation noted limited understanding among CPs and participants of the rationale underpinning the targeting approach and of the overall goals of the Programme.
- The growing efforts observed by the evaluation to gain a better understanding of needs, the context and to consult communities are positive steps towards ensuring that the delivery of livelihoods support is evidence-based and is guided by a more impartial assessment of needs. This is important in light of the highly politicized environment where the Programme operates.
- FFTs activities are not premised on country-wide labor market assessments and in part this is linked to a dearth of labor statistical data in Lebanon and Syria. To redress this gap, CO and FOs consult available market assessments conducted by other agencies and since 2018 the CO has been requesting CPs to provide evidence on the link between training topics and market needs. While this is no doubt positive, some training topics were found to be of limited relevance in supporting job opportunities or self-employment.
- No conflict-sensitive assessment is systematically conducted before the start of activities, despite its relevance in this context where social tensions run high.
- The understanding of the different pressures and shocks confronting Syrian and Lebanese has not been translated into a bifurcated programmatic approach to more appropriately tailor FFT and FFA activities to the different needs and abilities of these two population groups.
- The bulk of Programme activities are geared towards supporting rural livelihoods. This is appropriate as the majority of Syrians live in areas of the country where agriculture is the main source of income, also for poor Lebanese. More attention however is needed to the livelihoods of the thousands of Syrians displaced in urban areas and of the growing urban Lebanese population.
- Despite important efforts to better tailor activities to the specific needs of women, such as the gradual expansion of the portfolio of FFT activities, limited provision of childcare facilities remains a barrier for enrollment and retention of women.
- The Corporate FFA Manual offered limited technical context-specific support to the CO in the design of FFA activities. FFT activities are designed without corporate guidance or input since there is no FFT Manual at corporate level.

2.3. Evaluation Question 3 - Relevance and Appropriateness

- *How well did WFP livelihood activities contribute to nationally owned strategies and solutions?*
67. This evaluation has found that the CO has gone to considerable efforts to align the Programme with the strategies and priorities of relevant line ministries. This supports WFP commitments in the CSP and at the corporate level, in line with the SDGs and various development agreements. These efforts can also be seen as positively feeding into one of the three dimensions of the Resilience Lens, 'strengthen national/local capacities and institutions'⁴⁶.
68. As noted in section 2.1, the CO is an active member of the LCRP inter-agency coordination mechanism. With its stated focus on longer-term solutions and on livelihoods and

⁴⁶ https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/UNDP_Resilience-3RP_final-lowres.pdf

resilience, the Programme clearly contributes to the Government of Lebanon strategy of response to the Syrian crisis, embodied in the LCRP.

69. The LCRP places high emphasis on preservation of social stability in the country. Social Stabilization is a sector operating under the LCRP umbrella and one of the four LCRP strategic objectives seeks to “Reinforce Lebanon’s economic, social and environmental stability”. With social cohesion being one of its objectives, in addition to the focus on job opportunities and environmental conservation, the Programme is also aligned with key elements of the overall LCRP strategic approach.
70. Activities implemented under Pillar 2 to restore agricultural assets such as irrigation canals fit well within the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Strategy (2015-2019). Strengthening governance in the management and sustainable use of natural resources for example is the third of eight “Courses of Action” articulated in the strategy⁴⁷ and one area of intervention is increasing irrigation water storage quantity. Along the same vein and according to one key informant interviewed, Programme activities under Pillar 2 are aligned with a key priority of the MoA which seeks to increase irrigation water use and efficiency among smallholders to improve their agricultural productivity while also contributing to reducing rural-urban migration by ensuring that farmers stay and cultivate their land.
71. Key informant interviews also spoke positively of the working relationship established between the CO and MoA since 2017, both under the umbrella of the LCRP but also through bilateral dialogue. One example of the latter is the coordination that took place in 2018 to jointly conduct site visits and identify locations for implementation of Programme activities under Pillar 2.
72. The MoA-led Green Plan⁴⁸ and the 40 Million Trees Programme⁴⁹ are aimed at strengthening the protection and management of forests across the country. As indicated in Programme documents⁵⁰ and confirmed during key informant interviews, activities implemented under Pillar 3 are explicitly aligned to both initiatives to improve conservation and reforestation. The CO has also recently stepped up liaison with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) to ensure that activities with potential environmental impacts (e.g. forestry under Pillar 3, agricultural assets rehabilitation under Pillar 2) are submitted to the MoE for screening before the start of implementation.
73. This evaluation also observed significant efforts to closely liaise with ILO, and the Ministry of Labor (MoL) and Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) on involving displaced Syrians in Programme activities. The Programme is aligned with MoSA guidelines that require humanitarian agencies in the country to ensure that the ratio of Syrians to Lebanese beneficiaries is 50/50. Also, in line with MoL directives and to ensure that Syrians are not required to be issued with a work permit when participating in activities under Pillars 2, 3

⁴⁷ MoA Strategy (2015-2019). The Ministry of Agriculture November 2014.

⁴⁸ The Green Plan is an autonomous body under the MoA in charge of land reclamation and agricultural development activities. See <http://www.greenplan.gov.lb/en-gp/>

⁴⁹ Lebanon’s National Afforestation and Reforestation Plan.

⁵⁰ See WFP Lebanon, Annual Country Report 2018; WFP Lebanon, Draft 2019-2020 Livelihood Strategy.

and 4, the Programme offers temporary, short-term employment for a maximum of 60 hours per month. More recently, in the immediate aftermath of the Plan issued by the MoL (see Annex 10) in June 2019, the CO has stepped up liaison with ILO and MoSA to better understand the specific implications of the Plan on participation of Syrians in the Programme.

74. At the same time however, interviews also revealed aspects of the Programme related to adherence to humanitarian principles that were diverging from Government priorities. For example, all Government officials interviewed were keen to stress that Lebanese communities should be the primary target and beneficiaries of livelihoods and longer-term support provided by WFP but also of other humanitarian agencies in Lebanon. Reaching displaced Syrians was often portrayed as of secondary importance and largely limited to the provision of unskilled labor.
75. Some Government officials raised questions on some of the trainings, such as on digital skills, delivered by the Programme under Pillar 1 to Syrians. Their relevance and objectives were questioned since these trainings focused on building the skills of Syrians in sectors of the economy where existing labor legislations forbid them to work (see Annex 10)⁵¹.
76. These perceptions are not surprising and are ultimately a reflection of a public narrative that is increasingly critical of the Syrian presence in-country. At the same time however, they also cast a light on the growing constraints under which the Programme is operating and on the narrowing of the space for assistance to Syrians in this context. This and other external factors affecting results are further elaborated in section 2.6.

Key findings – Question 3

- The Programme is aligned with the Government strategy of response to the Syrian crisis embodied in the LCRP.
- Considerable efforts have been made by the Programme to align FFA activities with strategies and priorities of the MoA and MoE.
- The CO has closely liaised with ILO, MoL and MoSA to align targeting of displaced Syrians within FFA activities to existing guidelines and legislation on employment.
- Some aspects of the Programme, particularly targeting Syrians with livelihoods support, diverge from Government priorities. This is a reflection of the increasingly negative public narrative on Syrians' presence in the country and of the narrowing of the space for their assistance.

2.4. Evaluation Question 4 – Effectiveness

- *How effectively did the livelihoods interventions (per pillar) contribute to the stated objectives in the different project documents (EMOP, PRRO and CSP)?*

⁵¹ This is an area that is the focus of ongoing advocacy efforts by WFP and other international actors.

77. **Participant and beneficiary figures:** The EMOP 20433 did not specify a target for livelihood activities, and only set an aggregated target of 6,000 participants⁵² across all interventions in Lebanon⁵³. Figures for PRRO 200987 and the CSP are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: PRRO 200987 (2017) and CSP (2018-19) Participants' figures

Year	Participants			Document
	FFA	FFT	Total	
2017	10,200	1,000	11,200	PRRO 2000987
2018	12,750 ⁵⁴	1,200	13,950	CSP
2019	3,883	8,616	12,499	CSP

78. Information on actual participants reached by the Programme is extrapolated from Standard Project Reports (SPR) for 2016 and 2017. For 2018, the Lebanon Annual Country Report (ACR) 2018-2020 is used, while also noting its limited disaggregated information on participants⁵⁵. In order to arrive at an estimated number of actual participants of the Programme, figures on participants of FFA and FFT activities are extrapolated from the participant data file shared by the CO. Actual participant figures for January-July 2019 have also been drawn from the participant data. Annex 19 presents a summary of these figures⁵⁶.

79. According to available data, targets for the overall number of participants were nearly met in 2017 and significantly overachieved in 2018⁵⁷. Across both years, there has been a consistent underachievement with respect to number of participants in FFA activities and an overachievement in FFT activities (see section 2.2).

80. Available data on planned and actual cash transfer amounts are aggregated at the country level for 2016 and 2017, and Programme-related transfers cannot be isolated. The overall target for the cash transfer amount was not reached in 2016 but was nearly reached in 2017 (see Figure 1 in Annex 20). The ACR 2018 data allows for isolation of transfer amounts for the Programme specifically. This shows a significant underachievement of 3,184,259 USD as opposed to 49,100,000 USD planned (see highlighted rows in Table 6 in Annex 20). The underachievement is only related to value vouchers, however, and actual cash transfer amounts delivered were almost twice as planned, 2,757,421 USD against a target

⁵² Corresponding to 40,000 beneficiaries. The Programme calculates beneficiary figures by multiplying Programme participants by 5, which is the estimated average household size.

⁵³ This said, the SPR for 2016 shows a target figure for participants in FFA activities of 670 (292 men and 378 women), corresponding to 3,350 beneficiaries.

⁵⁴ Corresponding to an estimated 5,000 beneficiaries for FFT activities and 51,000 beneficiaries for FFA activities.

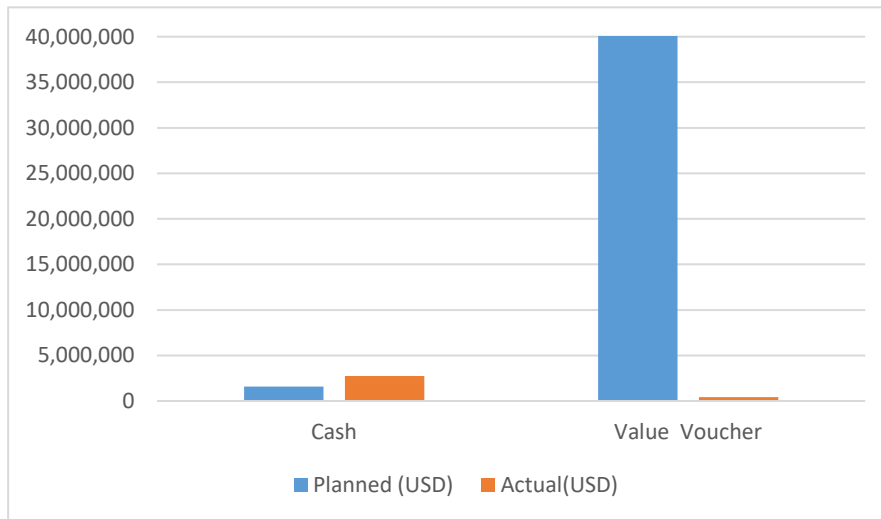
⁵⁵ The only relevant beneficiary figure from the report is the number of people trained under the capacity strengthening outcome, Strategic Outcome 02, Activity 03.

⁵⁶ Note that the table presents Programme participant numbers.

⁵⁷ The significant overachievement in 2018 beneficiaries seems to be in part related to target figures that are not updated following budget revisions. The ACR 2018 mentions "planning figures for all other activities from 2019 onwards will be re-adjusted based on the results of the retargeting exercises and operational realities on the ground".

of 1,600,000 USD (see figure 2 below). Note that according to the CSP, the only transfer modality for Programme-related activities are CBT, but as can be seen in Figure 2 below, the ACR reported a large target for vouchers as well, which has not been met. It is unclear what explains this radical departure from original plans, but it appears to be a general decision to move away from food vouchers to cash after the original targets were set.

Figure 2. Planned versus actual cash and voucher transfers in 2018



Source: SPR 2016, SPR 2017, ACR 2018 Cash and Voucher requirements and actual expenditures records

81. **Outputs** - In 2016, and 2017, reported output indicators in the SPR are limited to number of participants in various activities⁵⁸. This changed in 2018, with the introduction of the CSP logframe and specific livelihoods-related indicators. According to reported figures in the ACR, the Programme has reached or closely reached targets with respect to hectares of agricultural and orchard lands benefiting from rehabilitation activities as part of FFA. In all other outputs, however, the Programme has significantly departed from targets with either overachievement or underachievement, highlighting a disconnect between figures in planning documents and actual implementation on the ground.
82. This could be, in part, due to the short implementation time and the rush to deliver, which did not always allow for implementation of what was originally planned for. As some WFP staff pointed out in KIIs, the time to implement activities was very short, limited to 4-5 months at maximum⁵⁹. Several CP reports mentioned delays in the start of activities, including in the signing of FLAs. With a compressed time for implementation, CPs, CO and

⁵⁸ Except for number of agricultural tools distributed in 2016; also, there is some data on “milestones” achieved in 2017 with regards to asset creation, such as areas rehabilitated, meters of roads and canals constructed and/or rehabilitated, trees planted, etc. However, milestones are not reported against specific indicators or target values. Data is stored in an Excel file, and it is not possible to aggregate, as the figures are not always exact. (data shared by WFP CP in a file titled “2017 Livelihood project figures.xls”)

⁵⁹ The Programme cycle is one year and starts over after 12 months with new round of proposals, CP selections, and FLAs.

FO staff often reported being in a rush to get activities off the ground (e.g. coordinate with local authorities, carry out procurement processes, outreach, etc.).

83. Although the Programme successfully implemented a range of activities for an even greater number of participants than planned, this pervasive departure from planned figures (or in some cases, activities) can be seen as undermining overall Programme strategy as well as its ability to meaningfully monitor performance⁶⁰.
84. For example, only 60% of targeted irrigation canal rehabilitation plans appear to have been achieved⁶¹. Also, capacity building for smallholders, planned for 3,500 participants, seems to have not been implemented at all, while the target for general capacity strengthening was 500% overachieved. The Programme also only achieved 50% of its targets on assets built, restored or maintained by target communities. At the same time, there seems to have been a significant overachievement in construction or rehabilitation of water reservoirs as well as of seedlings produced. A list of all relevant output indicators for the Programme can be found in Annex 18.
85. **Outcomes** – The EMOP 200433 was primarily focused on improving food consumption. The stated outcome of the PRRO was also “achieving food security” but was focused on smallholders with a view to increase their production and sales and improve the availability of pro-smallholder public goods and services⁶². The CSP described the primary focus of SO2 as resilience-building. The outcome indicators have expanded to encompass livelihoods-based coping strategies and capture perceptions about benefits from constructed or rehabilitated assets (asset benefit indicator, ABI).
86. In 2016, Programme activities were piloted with few participants only, and since reported outcome indicator figures in the SPR 2016 are aggregated across all CSP SOs, the figures are not useful for understanding results of the Programme. A list of all relevant outcome indicators for the Programme can be found in Annex 18.
87. Proportion of households with acceptable food consumption score (FCS) for the Programme has slightly increased from August 2017 to December 2018⁶³. The bulk of this improvement is attributed to female headed households and appears to have happened mostly in 2018. In fact, this percentage worsened in 2017, and started improving in 2018 from a lower baseline. The same pattern is true for the consumption-based Coping Strategy Index (CSI). The proportion of households spending more than 65% of their income on food dropped by 10% from 2017 to 2018 but increased in 2018. The fluctuations and slight improvements in FCS, and CSI are consistent with the findings from FGDs which overwhelmingly indicated that changes in food consumption as a result of

⁶⁰ According to a WFP Staff, CSP targets were identified as non-achievable and are to be addressed in the upcoming CSP revision.

⁶¹ This is inconsistent with the 100% achievement reported on agricultural land benefiting from rehabilitated irrigation schemes (e.g. canals, see Annex 18), but this might be explained by how “benefiting” is defined.

⁶² Although it is stated in the PRRO, it is not clear if the activity was ever implemented, as reporting on it is unclear in 2017 beyond number of people trained and agricultural tools distributed. In 2018, and according to the CSP, there was a target for this but none of it was achieved as noted in the review of outputs.

⁶³ From 65% to 71%.

Programme activities was very limited, predominantly because of the small amount of cash injected and the short duration of the Programme.

88. The proportion of targeted communities reporting benefit from an enhanced asset base, improved significantly from 2017⁶⁴. By end of 2017, only 35% of community members reported benefiting from enhanced assets. This increased to 84.5% by the end of 2018. Breakdown by gender is not available. FGDs and interviews conducted are consistent with these findings, as the majority of Lebanese participants and non-participant community members agreed that the assets are beneficial. For example, the lining of irrigation canals with cement as part of rehabilitation activities was mentioned during interviews and some FGDs as having reduced seepage of irrigation water and waterlogging thus contributing to water conservation and better irrigation. The refurbishment of the Hamza Rifaai wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Baalbek (see Box 1) entailed the construction of a perimeter wall with gates, toilets, a children's play area, and 20 kiosks for small retailers equipped with water supply. Market users interviewed during a visit to the market for this evaluation found that the refurbishment had led to improved infrastructure which resulted in a better, cleaner environment overall.
89. Data on status (Lebanese vs. Syrian) is missing from all baseline and end-line analysis and reports precluding a disaggregated analysis of outcomes among Syrian and Lebanese population. A review of the raw data revealed that this information is not collected at baseline or end-line. This presents a significant limitation in understanding the effectiveness of the Programme, as the aggregated figure does not allow for an understanding of the outcome of activities for Syrian and for Lebanese separately, which could potentially be significantly different⁶⁵. Similarly, the Programme does not systematically analyze outcomes by gender or by PWD, which also limits the ability of deriving conclusions about the effectiveness of outcomes for men and women and for PWD.
90. As outlined in section 1.1, the four pillars have changed throughout implementation years, hence, a rigorous comparison of outcomes across pillars is not possible. The 2018 outcome monitoring report produced by the CO M&E unit breaks down the expected outcomes across different "streams", but they are different from the current pillars as included in the ToR for this evaluation.
91. The Programme collects and reports on all relevant and required WFP corporate indicators. Even though significant resources are needed to collect and analyze this data, it is unclear to what extent these indicators are actually leading to an understanding of the outcomes of Programme activities, and if and how they are used to adjust the Programme, beyond reporting.

⁶⁴ Note that this indicator is calculated through data collected from the Lebanese (host) community members only.

⁶⁵ As indicated by interviews with CO staff, this information will be collected in future outcome monitoring data collections.

92. The current monitoring framework, developed by the Programme and implemented by the M&E unit, does not measure important outcomes of activities, leaving significant gaps in understanding the effectiveness of the Programme. Examples of these include employment or self-employment attained following participation in FFT and FFA activities, increased agricultural production, or number of traders following rehabilitation of market sites. Anecdotal evidence on some of these outcomes is available (e.g. from CP reports) and has been captured in Section 2.6, but analysis and reporting on outcomes is overall unsystematic and limited. Also, no specific indicators for monitoring progress towards resilience-building objectives have been developed by the Programme. The latter is symptomatic of a gap at corporate level: the 2019 Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience found that “current corporate tools do not enable [Programme and monitoring staff to gather information on resilience] systematically or effectively”⁶⁶.
93. Furthermore, there appears to be limited use of Programme (registration) data, which this evaluation found to be linked to data quality issues resulting from a mostly manual collection and Excel-based management of large data files (See Annex 16).

Key findings - Question 4

- Overall, the Programme has delivered its main outputs, but there has been considerable underachievement in some (e.g. number of participants in FFA activities)⁶⁷ and significant overachievements in others (e.g. number of participants in FFT activities)⁶⁸. This departure from planning might be partly explained by the compressed time for implementation.
- FCS and CSI improved slightly in 2017 and 2018, consistently with findings from FGDs according to which improvements in food consumption were very limited, due to the small amount of cash transfers. In 2018 the ABI improved significantly from 2017; FGDs and interviews echo this finding where the majority agreed that assets established are beneficial.
- The Programme does not monitor outcomes disaggregated for Syrians and Lebanese, and does not systematically analyze outcomes by gender or PWD.
- The Programme does not monitor relevant livelihoods and resilience outcomes, including on employment attained following participation, agricultural production, or progress towards resilience-building. This limits the ability of Programme staff to understand and analyze results, use the data collected to ensure evidence-based programmatic decision-making and adjust activities as needed.

2.5. Evaluation Questions 5 and 6 – Efficiency

- *How cost effective were the different pillars per the identified challenges in the country?*
 - *Did WFP utilize its resources in an efficient way – ensuring the funding levels produced appropriate outcomes and outputs per the investment?*
94. In order to answer this question and analyze cost efficiency for each pillar, the Evaluation Team would require access to a compiled list of costs, including complete Programme

⁶⁶ WFP. Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience. January 2019.

⁶⁷ Also, number of assets built, maintained by targeted communities, km of irrigation canals constructed or rehabilitate, among others.

⁶⁸ Also, hectares of water reservoirs constructed/rehabilitated and total beneficiaries, among others.

and support (direct and indirect) costs by pillar. The Evaluation Team has been informed that, on the basis of existing WFP guidance, only total, aggregated cost data could be shared with the Evaluation Team. This has greatly limited the extent to which the evaluation could analyze efficiency of the Programme in a meaningful way.

95. At the Programme level, there is limited evidence of systematic comparative cost analysis⁶⁹ across CPs, pillars, or location. This may be in part due to the unavailability of cost details as mentioned above as well as the short implementation time, as mentioned by a number of CO staff.
96. To analyze the details of budgeted and actual costs of the Programme it is necessary to have access to detailed cost categories within the cost headings of 'CBT transfer cost and value', 'capacity strengthening', 'Implementation', 'Adjusted Direct Support Cost (DSC)' and 'Indirect Support Cost (ISC)' for each of the financial years under consideration. Costs would then need to be coded and identified in such a way that it is possible to isolate elements within each of the headings by modality, pillar, location, and CP (down to WFP level 4 and 5 in the country portfolio budget cost classification hierarchy) and should, in total, correspond to figures reported in the annual reports. It is unclear if this is at all possible given the cost structure of WFP⁷⁰.
97. It is not clear if existing cost descriptions and codes as well as the cost categories within the hierarchy have been set up in a way to correspond closely to the different Programme activities, pillars, partners and modalities or if WFP and CP staff time has been apportioned (from time sheets) to the different cost categories to the level of detail required to allow for a disaggregated cost analysis.
98. Although systematic cost efficiency analysis is missing, examples of cost saving do exist. For example, cost savings were noted under Pillar 4 by reverting to the use of one to two-year-old saplings rather than four-year-old ones⁷¹. Not only were the younger saplings cheaper, allowing for an increased number of trees to be planted, but even though they required more maintenance in the early years after planting, they had a greater survival rate.
99. The Programme is funded through a short-term humanitarian cycle awarded on an annual basis, requiring a large sum of money to be spent in a short timeline and all Programme activities to fit within one financial year. This is often not conducive to cost efficient implementation; nor does it encourage or allow for extensive cost efficiency analysis. This was cited as a major limitation by most CO staff.

⁶⁹ A file titled "implementation rates.xls" have been shared containing cost per participant for a selected number of CPs for FFA activities only. The numbers show great variation in cost per participant at CP as well as governorate level. It is unclear how the Programme has used this information, or if the equivalent data exist for all activities and CPs.

⁷⁰ Based on the changes instituted following the Financial Framework Review in 2017 WFP budgets and costs should be able to be isolated at "activity level". In the case of the Programme, "activity level" would most likely be interpreted as the CSP Activity 3 or 4 – rather than the more granular pillar level requested in the ToR.

⁷¹ According to one WFP staff, this is also aligned with the strategy of the MoA and Ministry of Environment.

100. Up until 2018 and linked to the annual nature of the donor funding, the CO was mostly signing one-year field level agreements (FLAs) with CPs. This led to a number of shortcomings, including a costly and tasking process of launching calls for proposals, vetting partners, and approving FLAs on an annual basis; compressed time for activities' implementation for CPs. In 2018, the recognition of this shortcoming has prompted the CO to start planning some activities and related FLAs with the same CP for longer than one-year (e.g. the 2018 FFT activities cycle which was from June 2018 till October 2019). This is clearly a positive step towards redressing this issue and streamlining this process.
101. The CO currently works with 24 CPs across the country. It is not clear to the Evaluation Team whether the choice of number of CPs is based on a comprehensive cost-efficiency and/or cost-effective analysis. As one CO staff noted, *"We want to build capacity of the local NGOs we have invested in and be more efficient about it. We want to do more with less - less activities but sustainable and scalable ones. We have CPs that implement a broad range of trainings in different areas. I think we should focus on CPs with specific expertise"*. While working with a fewer number of specialized CPs might bring about savings in transaction costs, it is important to also consider cost effectiveness to ensure the selected CPs are able to deliver and implement quality activities at a larger scale.
102. In addition, there is a feeling among some CO staff that a longer-term, more strategic approach to partner engagement could reduce overlap in project content and geographic coverage and might also lead to a reduction the number of CPs. One CO staff mentioned *"We have a lot of overlap in content [provided by different CPs] in more or less the same geographical area"*. This was also noted in at least one CP report analyzed. A few CPs also called for better coordination among CPs in the same geographical areas to ensure complementarity and manage participant lists more efficiently.
103. Currently, there are heavy requirements in terms reporting for CPs. There seems to be room for streamlining to save time, reduce the burden on partners and data redundancy for WFP, and ultimately, improve efficiency⁷². While it is essential that WFP remains informed on details of implementation at field level, given the lack of systematic analysis of these documents beyond basic monitoring, reducing reporting requirements could improve efficiency.
104. CPs repeatedly mentioned data management problems and low quality of registration data as bottlenecks in efficient project implementation. In addition to the burden on WFP to review and address complaints and fix data mistakes, errors in data also lead to loss of time and unrecompensed travel costs incurred by participants trying to ensure inclusion in the Programme and payments once enrolled. These data errors are thought to be mostly caused by manual collection of registration data and Excel based

⁷² Monthly narrative and outputs reports, weekly implementation plans, monthly technical updates, work plan and risk matrix as well as monthly reporting of list of beneficiaries to WFP for eligibility check have been mentioned by CPs as examples of heavy burden of reporting. According to a CO staff, reporting requirements were adjusted in 2018 to bi-monthly reports and are expected to be further refined in 2019.

management of participant records. To address this issue, the CO is currently piloting a digital data collection process and exploring the adoption of SCOPE for beneficiary information management.

Key findings – Questions 5, 6

- The Evaluation Team did not have access to disaggregated cost data, which has constrained the ability of this evaluation to analyze the efficiency of the Programme in a meaningful way and across the four pillars.
- While examples of ad-hoc cost saving measures were found by this evaluation, there is no evidence of systematic cost efficiency analyses or of an overarching strategy for managing efficiency of the Programme.
- The annual funding cycle is an obstacle to establishing long-term FLAs that could potentially lead to efficiency gains. The CO has started planning some activities and related FLAs with the same CP for longer than one year, with potential positive effects on efficiency. The administrative burden of reporting on CPs has negative repercussions on efficiency of resources, for both CPs and the CO.
- Data errors in cash payment processes linked to manual data collection and Excel-based management of records is inefficient and costly for CPs, CO and participants alike. The current piloting of digital data collection is a positive step forward towards improving efficiency of this process and increase data quality.

2.6. Evaluation Questions 7, 8, 9 - Impact and Sustainability

- *What are the primary and the secondary impacts of livelihoods activities on the communities and on the participants targeted?*
- *Will WFP contribution to Lebanon and to the participants targeted be sustained over time?*

105. The impacts discussed in this section are interpreted to be the outcomes, effects or results of the Programme (see Annex 14). In line with the non-experimental theory-based approach adopted by this evaluation, the medium and long-term outcomes outlined in the reconstructed ToC (see Annex 13) have been used as guidance to organize answers to the evaluation questions under the impact evaluation criterion⁷³. The outcome “Improved food security” (see reconstructed ToC) has been discussed in section 2.4 and as such is not discussed again here. Except where otherwise indicated, the outcomes outlined in this section are directly linked to Programme activities and therefore are interpreted to be primary impacts.

106. The weaknesses of the Programme monitoring framework (see section 2.2, Annexes 15 and 16), also around measuring progress towards resilience-building, have resulted in the lack of secondary data (apart from what has been already captured in section 2.4) on Impact and Sustainability, which could have been usefully included in this section. As such, the findings presented here are overwhelmingly based on the primary qualitative data collected through FGDs and interviews, and to a lesser extent, to the findings that

⁷³ To ensure a logical flow of the findings and the discussion presented in this section, some of the outcomes found in the ToC have been combined under one sub-heading. “Improved skills, knowledge and capacities” and “Greater employment/economic opportunities” are discussed under sub-heading “Employment and economic opportunities”.

have emerged from the analysis of CP final reports. Clearly, this significantly limits the ability of this evaluation to reach robust conclusions about Impact and Sustainability.

107. Longer-term effects of Programme activities and related sustainability and resilience-building results were not always apparent or measurable. For example, it is too early to assess the sustainability of forest rehabilitation and conservation activities, particularly when new trees have been planted, since it takes decades for trees to grow and they must be protected from premature cutting. In turn and to ensure a logical flow to the findings presented, the questions that were included in the evaluation matrix on Impact and Sustainability have all been merged and discussed here. As such, Sustainability considerations are weaved in the discussion on Impacts. This section concludes with an analysis of the internal and external factors that have affected results.

Agricultural productivity and assets established

108. The primary findings collected for this evaluation indicate possible increases in agricultural productivity in Qobayat. One Lebanese man landowner non-participant stated that before rehabilitation of the canal he was cultivating two crops: tobacco and potato and that he had recently added carrots as a third crop. Another landowner said that before he was harvesting potatoes twice a year and that since rehabilitation, he had started to harvest potatoes three times. Attribution of such changes to the Programme only however is difficult and as such, this increased agricultural productivity is likely to be influenced also by other economic and contextual factors. During FGDs in both Qobayat and Baalbek for example, Syrian and Lebanese participants noted that landowners were not only relying on the rehabilitated canal for irrigation but were also using other mechanisms, such as wells or pipes.
109. The Evaluation Team set out to understand the sustainability potential of the assets created or rehabilitated by the Programme under Pillar 2, 3 and 4. The evaluation found strong awareness among CP, CO and FO staff interviewed of the importance of involving Municipalities and other responsible local Government bodies, such as the Water Establishment Authority, from the start of Programme activities to ensure buy-in, ownership and eventually take over of the assets. This is positive as it denotes attention to a key sustainability aspect and, similarly to the findings in section 2.3, can be seen as contributing to one of the three dimensions of the Resilience Lens, 'strengthen national/local capacities and institutions'⁷⁴.
110. However, the extent to which the Programme has been able to involve local authorities with different interests, capacity and willingness also with a view of handing over activities and assets established was found to vary greatly from place to place. While in some locations Municipalities were simply not interested, in others they had been actively engaged at different stages of the Programme, such as lending heavy machinery to FFA activities. The latter was for example mentioned by LOST as one contribution of

⁷⁴ https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/UNDP_Resilience-3RP_final-lowres.pdf

the Municipality to the rehabilitation of the Hamza Rifaai market in Baalbek (see Box 1). The limited time for implementation (see below) was also mentioned by a number of CPs as constraining efforts to meaningfully engage local actors in Programme activities. This echoes the experience of another CP as stated in a 2017 final report:

"[there was] high interest from the Municipalities in community asset development and...[they] supported the work with skilled workers, machines, closing of the roads, etc."

111. The sustainability of assets created also hinges upon other external factors. Interview and FGDs participants for example indicated that, while fire prevention training sessions conducted as part of forestry activities, forest rehabilitation efforts are threatened by wildfires⁷⁵ and by the risk of clearcutting of trees for timber or charcoal, particularly ahead of or during the harsh winter months in mountainous areas.

Market linkages

112. This evaluation found some examples of activities designed and implemented to build or strengthen market linkages. For example, in 2018 the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)⁷⁶ conducted on-the-job training to participants on industrial sewing techniques in a factory in Zahle (Bekaa) to create direct linkages between participants and job opportunities. Examples of geared value chain development activities include skills development in the small ruminants value chain, such as weaving artisanal rugs using wool or producing dairy products, implemented by AUB (ESDU) and CWB (see Annex 6)⁷⁷. As also discussed in section 2.2, the CO has also increasingly paid attention to ensuring that market linkages are evidenced in FFT project proposals, and since 2018 has requested that CPs elaborate on the link between proposed training topics and market needs.
113. A number of CO staff stressed that enhancing market linkages and supporting value chain development, requires time and long-term investments, something that the one-year funding mechanism was ill-suited to support.
114. One of the objectives of construction or rehabilitation of farmer markets (Pillar 4) is to improve smallholders' access to markets⁷⁸. However, as Box 1 illustrates, the refurbishment of the Hamza Rifaai market in Baalbek visited as part of the sample for this evaluation did not increase market linkages for smallholders and did not alter existing social and institutional arrangements regulating access to the market as a result. In line with the discussion in section 2.2, resilience programming is well-placed to go

⁷⁵ The wildfires that spread across several areas of Lebanon at the time of writing the report in mid-October 2019 are a sad reminder of the real risk that wildfires pose to forest assets in this context. See <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/hellish-scenes-wildfires-engulf-lebanon-191015191252866.html>

⁷⁶ UNIDO is the only UN agency that has acted as WFP CP for this specific Programme activity.

⁷⁷ See AUB (ESDU) and CWB Project Proposal and interviews with CWB staff. Note however that all FGD participants of AUB (ESDU) and CWB Programme activities had participated in climate-smart agricultural training only hence no findings from primary data collection is available.

⁷⁸ WFP Lebanon. Livelihoods Market Activities Brief (internal document, no date).

beyond responses that merely respond to immediate needs (in this case work to improve infrastructure) to include interventions that can more boldly tackle underlying structural causes of vulnerability (in this case work to increase market linkages for smallholders). As Box 1 shows, in this specific case the Programme has not harnessed the potential of its resilience-building objective to increase market linkages and, critically, bring about change in the status quo.

Box 1 - Example

During the visit to the Hamza Rifaai wholesale fruit and vegetable market rehabilitated by LOST in 2018, the Evaluation Team found that the kiosks for small retailers created as part of the market rehabilitation were empty. LOST staff explained that market rehabilitation had been conceived in two phases: the first to improve market infrastructure and the second to work on issues related to access and market linkages, such as work with the Municipality to allocate the newly constructed kiosks to several smallholders using a rotational system. However, the second phase did not take place. In turn, no new market linkages had been created: sellers were the same landowners as before refurbishment took place, buyers were the same wholesalers, and no smallholders had gained access to the market.

Well-being and self-esteem

115. In addition to providing small and temporary respite from financial hardship through cash transfer injections, Programme participation offered a much-needed opportunity for female and male participants to be productive and reduce idleness. As also confirmed during interviews with CPs and from the analysis of CP reports, this was greatly valued by the great majority of FGD participants and was often associated with increased feelings of well-being and self-esteem.

"projects allowed participants to gain pride and dignity in earning their own income."

"[participants] reported being less stressed, happier, and feeling that they had a role within their communities."

116. Considering the short-term nature of most Programme activities, the sustainability of the above positive outcomes is highly questioned and most likely limited to the duration of Programme activities.

117. The evaluation set out to understand whether participation in Programme activities and decision-making on the use of the cash transfer resulted in any changes in household dynamics and gender relations. The findings indicated that the Programme afforded Syrian and Lebanese women a welcomed opportunity to go out, interact with others and, for some, earn money for the first time in their lives. This was particularly valued by Syrian women, some of whom reported living a relatively isolated life and rarely going out of the house (see section 2.7).

118. The newly acquired ability to contribute to their households financially - albeit for a limited amount of time and with a small amount of money - was often associated with increased feelings of self-esteem. Cash injections also enabled some to lend money to

their extended family members; the ability to contribute to reciprocal support mechanisms had increased their self-esteem and feelings of *"being proud"*. While these unintended outcomes of the Programme are positive, there was no evidence that they contributed to changes in household gender relations.

119. Both men and women in virtually all FGDs stated that decisions on how to spend the cash transfer were taken jointly between spouses. Many were keen to stress that the amount was so small that its expenditure did not warrant much discussion. As above, decision-making patterns on the use of cash do not indicate any changes in gender relations.
120. The majority of FGDs with male and female participants of forestry projects revealed the positive effects that reforestation and conservation activities had on their well-being and on that of the community. Planting trees and the establishment of trails was described as having led to improved living and environmental conditions. In the words of a Syrian man: *"before the Programme [LRI reforestation activity] there were bare mountain slopes, now there are small trees, hiking trails and the area is just nicer"*.
121. During some FGDs, reforestation activities were also indicated as having strengthened the bond between people and the environment. Some mentioned feeling good about having contributed to reforestation, which was perceived as beneficial for the environment and for current and future generations. There were also mentions of using rehabilitated forest sites for recreational purposes, for example to walk or do sports; something that before the Programme people did not previously do.
122. Primary evidence collected also indicate that some participants used skills and knowledge acquired in FFT activities to improve the well-being of their household. Syrian female participants in Baalbek for example explained that before attending the AUB (ESDU) and CWB climate-smart agricultural practices training they were buying fresh vegetables and herbs from the market. Some had put the learning into practice and had started to grow aromatic plants and vegetables in their backyard. In the words of one participant *"now we eat cleaner, fresher vegetables. They taste better!"*.
123. That said, they all added that limited or lack of access to irrigation water was a key challenge, pointing to a clear risk to the sustainability of this positive outcome. For some it meant that they could cultivate in their backyard only for a few months of the year and for others it meant that they could not cultivate at all. One Syrian woman for example noted that her landlord did not allow her to cultivate in the backyard as she would consume too much water.

Employment and economic opportunities

124. This evaluation has found mixed evidence on the ability of the Programme to enhance employment and economic opportunities. For example, in 2018 the CO conducted an

impact survey administered to participants who had attended digital skills training⁷⁹ in 2016 and 2017. The findings indicated that a quarter of participants surveyed had found employment: participants of the basic training had found part-time or full-time jobs in accounting, data entry or as supermarket cashiers, and those of who attended the advanced training had found part-time jobs in sales, as teachers or as non-paid volunteers⁸⁰. This however was a one-off exercise and no other similar surveys were available at the time of writing.

125. Primary evidence collected by this evaluation indicates that following participation in Programme activities only a limited number of male and female participants were able to find employment, and no one was able to become self-employed. The jobs that few participants managed to attain were unskilled, short-term and casual and as such the findings do not seem to indicate that these jobs will be long-term and sustainable. The analysis of CP final reports points to similar findings: only two reports included information about participants having found employment following participation in activities under Pillar 2.
126. Interviews and FGDs showed that Lebanese and Syrian female participants of the sewing and handicraft course delivered by MAPs (Pillar 1) had started working to produce handicrafts from home. One Lebanese female participant said that she was doing crochet handicrafts and was selling them to neighbors and friends. MAPs had also established connections with a Norwegian charity organization who had placed an order of 500 crochet teddy bears. At the time of data collection Syrian and Lebanese participants were producing the teddy bears and each was earning a lump sum of around USD 106-160 (180-270,000 LBP)⁸¹. During FGDs with Syrian and Lebanese men in Baalbek and in Qobayat, some said that they had found jobs as casual laborers in construction thanks to the cement mixing skills acquired during rehabilitation of irrigation canals.
127. It is important to note that at the time of writing CPs were not required to regularly report on employment outcomes and as such it is possible that participants have found jobs as a result of programme activities but that these positive outcomes have simply not been captured. Positive efforts to gain a better understanding of employment-related results are taking place. Interviews with CO staff indicated that a number of CPs have started to conduct follow up surveys with participants who joined Programme activities in 2018 precisely to assess rates of employment following participation. These results are not yet available however and have not been included in this report.
128. These mixed results found by this evaluation might be explained by the limited primary and secondary evidence available. The primary data collected by this evaluation is limited and potentially not representative (see section 1.2 and Annex 14). Also, as elaborated in

⁷⁹ Training delivered consisted of basic and advanced digital skills, English language, soft skills for free-lancing and entrepreneurship. See WFP Lebanon A snapshot of digital skills training in Lebanon. One year later. November 2018.

⁸⁰ WFP Lebanon A snapshot of digital skills training in Lebanon. One year later. November 2018

⁸¹ Each participant was producing around 20-30 teddy bears and getting paid 9,000 LBP per bear.

section 2.4, Programme analysis and reporting on a number of relevant outcomes, including employment and economic opportunities is unsystematic and limited.

129. FGDs with participants and interviews with CPs frequently highlighted the importance of official records (e.g. certificate, degree, diploma) attesting the successful completion of FFT activities as this was seen as facilitating access to job opportunities. In some cases, official records are indeed issued to participants. For example, MoA's official certificates are issued when some CPs delivering training in agricultural practices are affiliated with the MoA and/or use the MoA curricula. For other types of trainings however, for example food processing and marketing, linkages should be developed with the certifying body and training courses would need to undergo official examination by the relevant body for official certification to be issued. As noted by one CO staff, this is a time-consuming process and, critically, the training courses would need to be of much longer duration, well beyond the short timeframe of funding and Programme activities.
130. FGDs with participants, Lebanese in particular, also highlighted lack of start-up or seed capital as a key reason for not establishing income generating activities or small-scale enterprises following participation in Programme activities. One male Lebanese participant of the AUB (ESDU) and CWB climate-adapted greenhouses training for example explained that he had tried to set up a greenhouse on his plot following the training. Lacking the capital to start it alone, he spoke to his neighbors and they tried to join financial forces, but even then, they could not afford it and he eventually abandoned this business idea. The findings indicate that the inclusion of small livelihoods grants as a component of Programme activities to facilitate participants' access to capital was not systematic and only a few CPs had embedded this component in their activities. CO staff explained that the facilitation of access to microfinance and provision of loans or grants for Syrians as well as Lebanese is challenging and something that the Programme does not fully encourage, in light of the fragile country economic context and high rates of default. In turn, the provision of credit or grants by the Programme was indicated by CO staff as largely dependent on the nature of the activities implemented by different CPs.
131. Findings on increased economic opportunities are mixed. Small group discussions with Syrian non-participants living in ITS near the rehabilitated irrigation canal in Baalbek said that the rehabilitation did not result in additional agricultural labor opportunities in the area. In the words of a Syrian woman interviewed "*the canal did not benefit us with more jobs*". In Qobayat by contrast, Lebanese landowners noted increased agricultural productivity following rehabilitation and said that they had employed more Syrians and Lebanese laborers as a result⁸² (see next section). There are no mentions of changes on increased economic opportunities in the CP reports reviewed.

⁸² Note that no information is available on how many additional laborers they had hired and for how long.

Social cohesion

- *How well did WFP livelihood activities contribute to reduction of social tensions, improved social cohesion and other peace-building outcomes at the local level?*
132. According to Programme documents and as described in section 1.1, the main avenue through which the Programme seeks to achieve social cohesion objectives is through the joint involvement of both Syrians and Lebanese in FFA activities. Programme documents do not explicitly mention social cohesion objectives in the context of FFT activities. The evaluation however found that projects visited, and as confirmed by the analysis of CP reports, FGDs and interviews, all FFA and FFT activities have included Syrians and Lebanese participants.
 133. One of the three dimensions of the Resilience Lens is “contribution to social cohesion” and one of the six components of this dimension is “creating spaces of dialogue and interaction among various community groups”⁸³. By creating opportunities for interaction, the Programme is positively working on one aspect of social cohesion.
 134. CPs and FGD participants provided several examples on how Programme participation in both FFA and FFT activities had facilitated contact and positive interaction between Syrian and Lebanese, which in some cases had resulted in the establishment of friendships. MAPs staff said that participants of their training courses had started to use WhatsApp groups (that MAPs had created to facilitate project-related communication) to organize outings or invite each other to birthday parties. One Syrian woman explained that since her arrival in Lebanon she had largely kept to herself and had not socialized much with other Syrians or Lebanese in the village. During the LRI reforestation project she started to get closer to a Lebanese female participant; they exchanged mobile numbers, started to pay each other visits, and had become friends.
 135. The findings of the social cohesion surveys conducted by the CO indicate that social cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian participants did not change as a result of the Programme and the social cohesion score remained low at around 60 per cent⁸⁴.
 136. It is worth noting that during virtually all FGDs, Syrians appeared to be very cautious when expressing their opinions around inter-communal relations and tended to portray a rosier situation than their Lebanese counterparts. By contrast, Lebanese female and male participants often openly expressed negative sentiments towards Syrians. Competition for jobs and feelings of being priced out of the labor market by Syrians who are willing to work for significantly reduced wages for example was frequently mentioned in many FGDs in different locations. As the quote below from a Lebanese man illustrates, at times Lebanese participants felt that the tacit reason for the roll out of Programme activities in their area was to first and foremost support displaced Syrians.

⁸³ The Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States Sub-regional Response Facility (Syria Crisis) Amman, Jordan. p. 14.

https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/UNDP_Resilience-3RP_final-lowres.pdf

⁸⁴ WFP Lebanon. Social cohesion results of food for training and food for assets (2017-2018).

"I know that they are giving us work, they are giving us these projects because Syrians are living here. Without Syrians we would have not had this opportunity."

137. These findings indicate the difficulties of investigating this complex topic and of understanding what is really going on beneath the surface, particularly in the short time allocated for data collection for this evaluation. More importantly, they indicate the potential for Programme activities - such as FFAs providing temporary employment, and FFTs providing training to enhance employment opportunities - to unintentionally exacerbate social tensions. As the quote below shows, this is something also noted by some CPs in their reports:

"the construction work was considered by the Lebanese participants as a source of competition on the available job opportunities in the market"

138. This unintended potential negative outcome warrants attention, particularly in light of the fact that competition for lower-skilled jobs is the primary source of tension (64%) among people surveyed by UNDP and ARK⁸⁵ across the country, and especially in areas with the highest concentration of displaced Syrians, such as the Bekaa (92%)⁸⁶. Similarly, a recommendation from the baseline and end line survey on social cohesion that the CO conducted in 2017-2018 also highlights the need to better understand the implications that Programme activities have on perceptions of competition for jobs⁸⁷.
139. Findings emerging from the limited sample of this evaluation seem to show a link between the emergence of friendships and the duration of Programme activities. The longer activities lasted (e.g. over several months see Annex 6), the higher the likelihood of ties developing among participants. While more research is needed to better understand these dynamics and this link in particular, this is not surprising. The development of social bonds and relations inherently requires time and effort in any context and even more in contexts where tensions are pervasive, like in Lebanon. Clearly, improvements in the quality of relations in and of social cohesion goals is something that a one-off training session of eight days (see Annex 6) can hardly achieve.
140. Whether the social ties developed as a result of the joint participation in Programme activities will be sustained over time remains an open question. One aspect that is important to highlight here relates to the weak link between enhancing direct interaction between Syrian and Lebanese and the effects that this might have on broader perceptions on the presence of displaced Syrians at the local level and in the country. In a number of FGDs Lebanese participants stated that they appreciated the interaction with other Syrian participants during FFT and FFA activities. This, however, was not found to have translated in changed overall perceptions towards Syrians in Lebanon: the same participants were also vocal in expressing their negative perceptions of Syrians, as

⁸⁵ <https://www.arkgroupdmcc.com/>

⁸⁶ ARK and UNDP. Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon Wave II: Narrative Report January 2018, p.2.

⁸⁷ WFP Lebanon. Social cohesion results of food for training and food for assets (2017-2018).

discussed above. This echoes the findings of the ARK and UNDP surveys according to which “perceptions of refugee population pressures were more significantly dependent upon historic and structural factors and not only dependent upon personal experience or direct interactions with refugees”⁸⁸.

Key findings – Questions 7, 8, 9

- Increases in agricultural productivity might have occurred in one location sampled for data collection, but attribution to the Programme is difficult.
- The sustainability potential of assets created was linked to interest, capacity and willingness of local authorities, which varied from place to place. The short time for implementation negatively affected the ability to meaningfully involve local authorities.
- Attention to market linkages and development of value chains was very limited in the Programme.
- Programme participation and cash injections for the duration of activities had positive effects on the well-being and self-esteem of participants. For women, Syrians in particular, it gave them an opportunity to go out of the house, interact with others, and contribute to the household economy. It did not however lead to changes in gender relations or household dynamics.
- Mixed results and limited findings, both primary and secondary, were found in relation to the ability of the Programme to enhance employment opportunities. A survey conducted by the CO in 2018 shows that one quarter of participants of digital skills training had found employment. Primary data however point to only marginal gains in this regard.
- While Programme documents link social cohesion objectives to FFA activities only, the evaluation found that in practice both FFA and FFT activities included Syrians and Lebanese participants.
- Programme participation in both FFA and FFT activities facilitated contact and positive interaction between Syrian and Lebanese, which in some cases resulted in friendships. The longer activities lasted the higher the likelihood of ties developing among participants.
- With competition for jobs a key source of tension in the Lebanon context, there is a risk that Programme activities aiming at enhancing job opportunities might further fuel social tensions.
- Whether social ties developed as a result of joint participation in Programme activities will be sustained over time remains an open question. There was a weak link between enhancing social interaction and its effects on broader perceptions on Syrians.

Internal and external factors affecting results

141. **Internal** - This evaluation has identified a number of factors influencing results that have to do with Programme design and implementation. By far the most frequent complaint of all FGD participants, also echoed by CPs in their reports and interviews for this evaluation, was the short duration of Programme activities. Difficulties to reach participant targets - which CPs perceived to be high - were also widely mentioned in interviews. To reach those targets, CPs either ended up restricting opportunities for participation in FFA and FFT activities for more than once or allowed participants to only work or attend training for a very limited amount of days per month.
142. The repercussions of the short-term nature of activities were pervasive. These included: cash injections of limited value over a very short amount of time, which negatively affected food security and livelihoods gains; challenges around participation of

⁸⁸ ARK and UNDP. Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon Wave II: Narrative Report January 2018, p.ii.

Lebanese, men in particular, with negative repercussions on the relevance of the Programme (see section 2.2); ability to meaningfully engage local actors to gain their buy-in but also to find sensible exit strategies; trainings that were for the most part short, affecting the ability of the Programme to ultimately build the necessary skills, knowledge and capacities to enhance employment or self-employment opportunities.

143. In the great majority of FGDs, participants said that they had experienced delays in receiving their cash transfers, either first-hand or they had heard of other participants who had. This is consistent with interviews conducted with CO, FO and CPs as well as with the findings emerging from the analysis of CP reports where delays are frequently mentioned. Delays were mostly linked to data errors (see section 2.5), delays in the distribution of debit cards, and wrong PINs associated with newly distributed debit cards. In addition to affecting the quality of implementation, delays were found to have had negative repercussions on the relation between CPs and participants. CPs frequently mentioned the difficulties that they were facing in explaining the reasons for delays to participants. While the majority stated that they were able to reach FO staff and that they were generally responsive, this did not always lead to a swift solution. A number of CP staff stated that they had been threatened by participants in their offices but also at their homes.
144. The growing importance of FFT in the Programme portfolio of activities (section 2.2) has not been matched by equal investments to ensure that CO, FO and CP staff are equipped with the necessary tools, such as a FFT specific manual, to guide the design and implementation of FFT activities. In part, this is also linked to the lack of a FFT manual at the corporate level.
145. **External** – This evaluation has identified a number of factors influencing results over which the CO has limited control. The dearth of labor market data has been discussed in section 2.2. In addition, other country-wide data that would no doubt be useful for programmatic purposes - such as national poverty rates, total population, NPTP beneficiaries - is limited and outdated.
146. The findings have highlighted host communities and Government fatigue with Syrian's protracted presence in the country and prejudicial attitudes towards Syrians, largely driven by competition over resources, for lower-skilled jobs in particular. In turn, social tensions driven by multiple and evolving causes⁸⁹ are becoming increasingly prominent and Government's regulations are narrowing the space for support to Syrians and for their self-reliance, greatly constraining their ability to engage in economic activities. One of the reasons for the short-term nature of activities discussed in Internal factors above is linked to the fact that the Programme can only offer Syrians temporary, short-term employment for a maximum of 60 hours per month (see section 2.3) so that Programme participation is not considered by the MoL as employment. These trends are taking place against long-standing structural challenges discussed in section 2.1 and Annex 10 amidst

⁸⁹ ARK and UNDP. Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon Wave II: Narrative Report January 2018.

grievances of the local population as shown in the anti-government protests that enveloped Lebanon at the time of writing⁹⁰. These factors are all affecting the Programme and its ability to reach objectives on social cohesion and on enhancing livelihoods opportunities for displaced Syrians in particular.

147. The highly politicized environment affects the ability of the Programme to deliver livelihoods support based on impartial assessments of needs. The discussion has highlighted interference of local authorities in the targeting of Lebanese participants and, especially up till 2018 also in the selection of localities for implementation and types of FFA activities.
148. As in other contexts, short-term, yearly funding is ill-suited to respond appropriately to needs that are chronic in nature, and to adequately support inherently long-term initiatives such as those implemented by the Programme.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

149. Based on the findings presented in the previous sections, an overall assessment that responds to the evaluation questions is provided below. This is followed by five recommendations of how the CO, FOs, CPs, RBC, and HQ and can take action to build on the lessons learned.

3.1 Conclusions

150. Complementing humanitarian assistance with longer-term strategies of intervention aiming at supporting livelihoods and building resilience is relevant to address the challenges that Lebanon faces today. The CO has gained a credible reputation in country and is well-placed to complement its large-scale cash response with livelihoods support, delivered through the Programme, targeted at both displaced Syrians and Lebanese host communities. Overall, the objectives of the Programme are relevant and appropriate. The donor provides short-term, yearly donor funding which constrains the ability of the Programme to achieve longer-term resilience-building and livelihoods objectives and implement longer-term activities. In addition, the ToC and the livelihoods strategy underpinning the Programme are not clearly elaborated. The Programme seeks to target vulnerable Lebanese and the most vulnerable and food insecure displaced Syrians unassisted with cash and food assistance under SO 1. The evaluation found this approach as limiting the potential that complementary cash and livelihoods programming might have to synergistically strengthen positive food security, livelihoods and resilience outcomes.
151. Since the start of the Programme considerable, positive efforts have been undertaken to ensure that FFA activities are premised on a more robust understanding of needs and of the context. Significant steps have also been taken to improve community consultation

⁹⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/lebanon-protests-191019063629182.html>

- processes to better ensure that design and implementation of activities are grounded in evidence and are based on an impartial assessment of needs, something that is particularly important in the highly politicized context where the Programme operates.
152. Despite the growing importance that FFT activities have in the Programme portfolio, they have not been matched by adequate guidance and support at the corporate level and no FFT guiding corporate manual is available. In the absence of country-wide labor market data, in both Lebanon and Syria, the CO has consulted available market assessments conducted by other actors and has requested CPs to provide evidence of how trainings can fill anticipated market gaps. Despite these positive steps, some training topics were found to have limited potential in enhancing participants' employment opportunities. Despite the importance of understanding the extent and nature of social tensions and, critically, of the effects that livelihoods support might have on existing tensions in this context, the evaluation found that no conflict-sensitive assessments are systematically conducted before the roll out of Programme activities.
 153. The Programme has not developed a tailored package of activities that can ensure a better, more relevant response to the different needs, vulnerabilities but also capacities and future prospects of Syrian and Lebanese, men and women. For the most part, the Programme has been conceived with a 'rural lens' in mind. This is appropriate, given that the great majority of Syrians have taken up residence in areas of the country where agriculture is the main source of income, for both poor Syrians and Lebanese. Building on ongoing activities such as digital skills training and joint initiatives with other actors, more attention should be paid to also tailor more Programme activities to urban livelihoods.
 154. The CO has gone to considerable efforts to align the Programme with Government strategies and priorities, including with the LCRP, MoA five-year strategy and MoA's initiatives such as the Green Plan and the 40 Million Tree programme. The CO is also closely liaising with ILO, MoL and MoSA to ensure that Syrian's involvement in FFA activities is in line with existing guidelines and regulations.
 155. The Programme has delivered its intended outputs. FCS and CSI outcomes improved slightly in 2017 and 2018, consistently with findings from FGDs according to which improvements in food consumption were very limited, due to the small amount of cash transfers. In 2018 the ABI outcome improved significantly from 2017; FGDs and interviews echo this finding where the majority agreed that assets established or rehabilitated are beneficial.
 156. The Programme does not monitor outcomes disaggregated for Syrians and Lebanese, and does not systematically analyze outcomes by gender or PWD. Relevant livelihoods outcomes, such as employment attained following participation, agricultural production, and progress towards resilience-building goals are also not monitored. This weakness in the monitoring framework limits the ability to understand and analyze results, use data collected to ensure evidence-based programmatic decision-making and adjust activities as needed.

157. The evaluation's ability to analyze the efficiency of the Programme in a meaningful way and across the four pillars was limited by the lack of availability of disaggregated financial data. The evaluation found positive examples of efficiency gains, but lack of systematic cost efficiency analyses and of an overarching strategy for managing Programme efficiency was highlighted as a gap.
158. Answers to questions on Impact and Sustainability were affected by the limited primary and secondary monitoring data on outcomes. In turn, the majority of findings were drawn from primary qualitative investigations conducted for the evaluation and from the analysis of CP reports. Increases in agricultural productivity might have occurred but primary findings indicate that attribution to the Programme is difficult. No secondary findings are available as the Programme does not monitor this outcome. The sustainability potential of agricultural and forestry assets created was linked to the interest, capacity and willingness of local authorities, which was found to vary greatly from place to place. The short time for implementation negatively affected the ability to meaningfully involve local authorities but also to support market linkages and engage more meaningfully in the development of value chains.
159. Participation in the Programme and cash injections for the duration of activities temporarily reduced participant's idleness with positive gains on their well-being and self-esteem as a result. For women, Syrians in particular, opportunities offered by the Programme to go out of the house, interact with others, and contribute to the household economy were highly valued. Programme participation facilitated contact between Syrians and Lebanese, which in some cases resulted in friendships. A possible link between the length of activities and the development of social ties was observed. With competition for jobs a key source of tension in this context there is a risk that Programme activities that ultimately seek to enhance job opportunities might further exacerbate social tensions. Whether social ties developed as a result of joint participation will be sustained over time remains an open question. The evaluation observed a weak link between greater social interaction through Programme participation and the effects of this interaction on redressing broader negative perceptions on Syrians living in the country.

3.2 Recommendations

160. Based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, five recommendations are outlined below.
161. **Recommendation 1:** In collaboration with FOs and CPs and with support from RBC and HQ, the CO should review the Programme ToC to more clearly articulate the vision for change that the Programme seeks to bring about, its livelihoods and resilience objectives, and the logical sequence between outputs, outcomes and impact.
- Clear, realistic and measurable objectives in light of WFP mandate and expertise, internal and CP capacity, resources and funding, and existing internal and external constraints should be developed.

- The logical sequence between outputs, outcomes and impact should be clearly spelled out, underlying assumptions and influential internal factors (e.g. CP capacity, Programme dedicated resources) as well as external ones (e.g. risks and shocks, narrowing space of assistance to displaced Syrians, available type and length of funding) should be made explicit.
- This should be conceived and implemented as a joint exercise among the CO, FOs and CPs, and if possible also including government agencies, to ground discussions in operational realities and ensure that local perspectives, concerns and ideas are adequately included.

162. **Recommendation 2:** In collaboration with FOs and CPs and with support from RBC and HQ, the CO should update the current livelihoods strategy to operationalize the revised ToC, specifically focusing on conceptualizing resilience, outlining the programmatic and targeting approach, and the engagement with CPs.

- Resilience: Drawing on existing resources⁹¹ adopt a definition and conceptualization of resilience for the Programme and articulate answers to “resilience to what?” (e.g. which shocks, pressures and stresses), and “for who?” (e.g. the country, communities, households, and/or individuals – women and men, Syrian, Lebanese).
- Programmatic approach: Revisit the type and length of activities delivered to ensure their alignment with the ToC and with the Programme vision for livelihoods support and resilience-building for targeted populations. In light of the different needs, capacities and prospects that Syrians and Lebanese have in this context, the development of a different programmatic approach and strategy of engagement for Syrians and Lebanese (e.g. different types and length of activities) to make the Programme more relevant to their needs and increase effectiveness should also be considered as part of this process.
- Targeting: Using the ToC as the foundation, revisit the current targeting approach to ensure alignment to the revised resilience and livelihoods objectives of the Programme. Build on ongoing efforts to explore how the Programme can expand its focus to also tailor activities to support the livelihoods of Syrian and Lebanese urban populations.
- Engagement with CPs: CO and FOs should continue to work on engaging with and investing in the capacity-building of fewer, more specialized CPs beyond the Programme annual funding cycle. To reduce the administrative burden of developing new FLAs every year, the inclusion of clauses indicating the contingency of longer-term FLAs on receipt of donor funding could also be explored by the CO with support from HQ.

⁹¹ For example: “The State of Resilience Programming. The Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States Sub-regional Response Facility (Syria Crisis) Amman, Jordan”. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/UNDP_Resilience-3RP_final-lowres.pdf and WFP “Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience”. January 2019 https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000102462/download/?_ga=2.59447853.1293251904.1573739416-1976588329.1571502850

163. **Recommendation 3:** The CO should expand and improve the current monitoring and reporting framework as well as the data collected and analyzed by the Programme to ensure a more robust monitoring of results and strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

- Monitoring outcomes: Ensure that outcomes identified in the revised ToC are systematically and comprehensively monitored. Specific, well-defined indicators for each activity or pillar and appropriate disaggregation, at the minimum, by gender and status (Lebanese vs. Syrian) should be included.
- Data: Monitoring and Evaluation data should be collected in a way that it can be merged with Programme data with a view to strengthening the connections among different databases: the adoption of unique identifiers should be considered in this regard. The CO should also conduct a comprehensive review of the data collected and analyzed by the Programme and take the necessary steps to improve its quality, coherence and completeness. Building on the findings of the current piloting of digital data collection, the CO in collaboration with FOs and CPs should pay specific attention to improving the quality of participant/registration data to strengthen outcome monitoring and redress the errors that are driving cash transfer delays.
- Evidence-based decision-making: To ensure more evidence-based programmatic decision-making, the CO could consider launching annual "Learning events", involving FOs and CPs and held prior to CSP revisions and/or the roll out of new activities, during which data collected is analyzed, presented, and discussed, with clear suggestions put forward for strategic and operational Programme adjustments. A structured management response process might further ensure that accepted recommendations are incorporated in programming going forward.

164. **Recommendation 4:** The CO and FOs should redress the programmatic weaknesses identified by the evaluation with a view of improving the overall quality and effectiveness of the Programme by addressing gaps in assessment and analysis and corporate guidance for FFT activities.

- Assessment and analysis:
 - Ensure that conflict risk assessments are systematically conducted before the roll out of activities.
 - Incorporate systematic cost efficiency analysis in the project management cycle, at least once every year. At the minimum, the main cost drivers of the Programme should be reviewed, overall and by pillar or activity. A comparative analysis of cost effectiveness of CPs should also be undertaken to assess areas such as cost per participant; ratio between assets, trainings, or goods directly delivered to participants and other costs; cost per outcome.
- FFT Manual: In light of the expanding FFT portfolio of activities and with the support of HQ and RBC, complement the FFA Manual developed for Lebanon with a FFT

Manual to provide appropriate guidance for the design and implementation of training activities for use by CO, FO and CP staff.

165. **Recommendation 5:** The CO should work with the donor and HQ to improve the predictability and duration of funding and adjust internal procedures to the extent possible to enable a longer-term programme implementation approach.

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