

# Gender and Social Inclusion

Accelerating progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## 2023 IN NUMBERS



Assisted people  
**52% Male - 48% Female**





**4%** of assisted people are persons with disabilities

Lebanon's economic crisis has exacerbated existing inequalities. Women and persons with disabilities in particular face greater challenges to access employment and education. In 2022, while the overall unemployment rate stood at 29 percent, **women experienced higher unemployment** (33 percent) compared to men (28 percent). **Youth unemployment stood at 48 percent**, almost double the rate for adults (29 percent).

In terms of women's economic empowerment, **discriminatory laws persist**, with no guarantee of equal pay for equal work and social security laws that explicitly discriminate against women. Gender inequality disproportionately affects women, leading to higher rates of child marriage especially among Syrian refugee girls and young women between the ages of 15 and 19 (22 percent), unpaid domestic work, sexual violence, and food insecurity.

In June 2023, assisted Lebanese households headed by women faced similar food security vulnerabilities as those headed by men. In contrast, **assisted Syrian refugee households headed by women experienced significant higher food security vulnerabilities than households headed by men.**

	Highly Food Insecure	Lebanese	Syrian Refugee
	Female-headed households	<b>18%</b>	<b>44%</b>
	Male-headed households	<b>17%</b>	<b>31%</b>

## PROGRAMME COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY

WFP adopts a needs- and rights-based approach, integrating gender, protection, and disability perspectives into its project design, implementation and evaluation. During 2023, WFP encouraged cooperating partners to prioritize the inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in WFP's different activities (see [WFP Lebanon Disability Inclusion Factsheet](#)). This was achieved through various support measures, including transportation, childcare, nursing services, and extended community outreach.

**Under the livelihood activities**, reforestation projects were designed to enable the participation of women by providing transportation, childcare and nursing services.



**38%** of the participants engaged in these activities were women.

Additionally, WFP livelihood activities included several **trainings for women** participants focused on agricultural skills and vocational and digital skills to enhance women's competitiveness in the job market.



**20%** of assisted wheat farmers are female



**50%** of supported businesses are led by women

In May 2023, WFP organized a training session to promote inclusivity and equal opportunities within the [Food System Challenge](#) supporting small businesses. The training had immediate positive outcomes, with participant businesses showing a heightened awareness of the importance of hiring people with disabilities.



**103** Women operate the school kitchen

Receiving food safety and management trainings along with a monthly stipend.

As for **Emergency Response Programmes**, WFP continuously adapts its programme strategies to **ensure safer and more dignified access to assisted people**, such as expanding its cash redemption points and providing on-site support to women to be more confident when using ATMs.

## AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

In 2023, WFP strengthened its gender and social inclusion (GESI) advocacy by working with partners to **incorporate awareness activities into their work**. These activities involved conducting sessions for individuals assisted by WFP, addressing topics such as nutrition, gender-based violence, disability inclusion, and harmful social norms.

On International Women's Day, WFP organized an **exposition where 14 Syrian and Lebanese women sold traditional homemade food** provisions and participated in a cooking event with WFP ambassador chef Asma Khan. WFP also organized an exposition on the International Day of Cooperatives, where **8 Lebanese women-led cooperatives and MSMEs, showcased and sold their traditional homemade food provisions**.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign that started on 25 November 2023, WFP conducted awareness sessions on social norms and Gender Based Violence for **male beneficiaries of the emergency response activities and women who work in school kitchens**. Additionally, WFP coordinated with NGOs working in the LGBTQ+ community to explore integrating these groups into WFP assistance programs.

## GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

In 2023, WFP conducted **training on gender and social inclusion concepts**, including gender-based violence, for **560 social workers** at the Ministry of Social Affairs. The training contributed to enhancing the safety and accessibility of social assistance for marginalized groups within social safety net programs, benefiting over 800,000 individuals in 2023.

In collaboration with UNWOMEN, FAO, CARE, UNDP, and the Food Security and Agriculture Sector (FSAS) in Lebanon, WFP conducted in July 2023 training for the FSAS's partners. The training focused on how to **design and manage food security and agriculture projects with a gender-responsive approach**. Additionally, WFP held a Training Of Trainers (ToT) on GESI for its Gender focal persons equipping them with the knowledge and skills to be effective advocates and change-makers.

## PARTNERSHIPS

In June 2023, WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **UN Women** to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion in Lebanon. This collaboration involves **conducting regular research to integrate and evaluate gender equality and social inclusion aspects in assistance programmes**. The findings will be used to inform technical assistance and policy support to the Government of Lebanon.

In September 2023, WFP endorsed the **United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) Disability Action Plan for 2023-2025** and committed to various initiatives aiming to improve food security for the most vulnerable populations, as well as to enhance the capacity of public entities to create inclusive social protection systems.

## 2024 & BEYOND

In accordance with its strategy to advance gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in Lebanon, WFP will continue to integrate age, gender, disability inclusion, and diversity into the implementation and monitoring of its different activities in 2024 to ensure equitable access to assistance.

WFP will work towards addressing the economic root causes of gender inequalities and social barriers affecting food security and nutrition. This involves the implementation of diverse activities, including enhancing **access to sustainable agriculture and improving inclusive and equitable access to land, technology, markets, and resilient agricultural practices**.

Additionally, in collaboration with other UN agencies, NGOs, and partners, WFP will adopt a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing food insecurity and malnutrition with **a specific focus on women and children in Lebanon**. A key component of this approach is the implementation of a tailored Social and Behaviour Change Communications (SBCC) initiative.

WFP will also strengthen its collaboration with partners **specialized in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response programming** and will support national initiatives focusing on addressing GBV, to enable safe and dignified access to protection and rehabilitation services.



Photo: Care International in Lebanon

Hayat proudly opened her small shop in Baraachit, South Lebanon, 20 years ago. She considers the store her second home, dedicating much of her time to it. As her business grew, Hayat decided to expand into farming. Together with her husband, they built greenhouses and began cultivating seasonal vegetables to sell at the shop.

To enhance her skills, Hayat enrolled in farming techniques and business courses supported by the World Food Programme in Lebanon and CARE International. These courses provided her with new skills and connected her with other small business owners in her town. Hayat offered her fellow project participants shelf space in her store to sell their products, creating a market link for local producers. She found great joy in the learning experience, often referring to it as "going to school" and embracing the opportunity to be a student once again.