

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

WFP Lebanon - June 2025

2024 IN NUMBERS



2.33 million
people assisted



51% male



49% female



4% assisted
person with disabilities



467,000
households assisted



10% of assisted households
have a person with disability



World Food Programme

FROM CAREGIVERS TO BREADWINNERS: WOMEN'S HARDSHIP DURING THE CONFLICT

The 2024 conflict in Lebanon disproportionately impacted women and girls, with over 1.5 million people affected and 900,000 displaced, 69 percent of whom were women and children. In addition to caregiving, many women assumed the role of primary breadwinners due to the loss, injury or displacement of their husbands. Limited livelihood opportunities severely affected their physical and mental well-being, compounded by challenges in accessing available assistance programmes.

Men remaining in conflict-affected areas faced widespread job losses and economic hardship, often prompting women to seek income-generating opportunities to support their families. In many cases, women demonstrated resilience by leading cooperative initiatives, such as preparing and distributing hot meals in displacement shelters.

Protection-related risks for women and girls increased in displacement settings, largely due to overcrowded shelters, limited privacy, shared living spaces with unrelated men, and poor hygiene conditions.

COORDINATION IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In the face of Lebanon's 2024 crisis, WFP worked with 60 members of the Food Security and Agriculture Sector to embed gender at the core of humanitarian response. To guide this effort, WFP developed and shared practical guidance on [Integrating Gender Equality Commitments in Emergency Response](#), offering concrete strategies to ensure equal access to resources, safety and meaningful participation of all affected people.

To translate guidance into action, 28 sector members were sensitized on Gender and GBV risk mitigation. Partners began adapting practices accordingly, for instance, introducing separate distribution lines for women and men in shelters to reduce overcrowding and enhance safety. As an active member of the Gender in Humanitarian Action Sub-Working Group, WFP also contributed to identifying [three priority actions for gender equality in the Lebanon humanitarian response](#). These key actions revolve around evidence-based programming, collaboration with women-led organizations and ensuring safe access to services and humanitarian aid for women and girls.

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

→ EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING

In 2024, as part of this collaboration, WFP and UN Women conducted a Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) review for the Livelihood and Resilience Programme to determine entry points for enhancing GESI mainstreaming in WFP's livelihood programming. As a first concrete step, guidelines on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) responsive programming and childcare services were developed for WFP and its implementing partners, aimed at creating a safer and more supportive environment for mothers, participants in WFP's livelihood activities.

As part of its efforts to strengthen national social protection systems, WFP collaborated with UN Women to conduct a comprehensive gender study aimed at informing the design of more inclusive and effective safety net programmes in Lebanon. The study focused on the food, nutrition, and health needs of vulnerable groups in Lebanon, including women and girls of reproductive age, women-headed households, older women, and persons with disabilities, who are beneficiaries of the National Social Safety Net.

The study assessed the influence of gender dynamics and household relations on access to essential services, analysed the nutritional awareness among targeted groups, and identified key barriers hindering their ability to meet basic needs. Among the 1,723 respondents surveyed, the findings revealed significant gaps in nutrition knowledge, economic constraints limiting access to nutritious food, and the unique challenges faced by women-headed households and persons with disabilities in securing food and healthcare.

The study's recommendations aim to inform the development of gender sensitive policies, support the design of a harmonized National Social Safety Net and provide evidence to advocate for the food and nutrition security needs of Lebanon's most marginalized communities.

→ FACILITATING DIGNIFIED ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE

Restrictive measures against Syrian refugees, such as frequent checkpoints, curfews and increased risks of detention and deportation, have impacted women and girls differently from men and boys. While men were often the primary targets of these restrictions, women and children were increasingly compelled to undertake risky movement to access basic family needs.

To reduce protection risks and ease access challenges for refugee families, WFP expanded and diversified its cash redemption network in 2024. Eight additional Money Transfer Operator (MTO) agents were added in key high-risk areas, including Wadi Khaled in Akkar, North Lebanon and Hermel city in Baalbek. In total, 133 MTO agents complemented the existing ATM network, offering safer, more convenient and more affordable access points for beneficiaries, particularly in locations where security checkpoints are more concentrated.

→ WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Consultation with 50 WFP women participating in WFP's livelihoods activities in conflict-affected areas revealed priorities for rebuilding their livelihoods. Many strongly preferred cash assistance or low-interest loans, which will enable them to meet food and business needs. Businesswomen, in particular, reported the loss of business or cooperative facilities and limited market access. To re-establish their income-generating activities, they identified the need for targeted training in business recovery, financial management and marketing.

WFP's livelihood projects are designed to promote women's participation and empowerment, offering a pathway to recovery for those who have lost their livelihoods. In 2024, women accounted for 30 percent of greenhouse owners supported by WFP, receiving tailored coaching on climate-resilient agricultural practices. This support enhances their productivity, income and role in food production.

Looking ahead, WFP is strengthening the link between livelihoods and sustainable markets by integrating small food producers, particularly women-led businesses, into its national school meals programme. School kitchens have been identified as potential markets for businesses, particularly those producing dairy products, with selection based on proximity, quality assurance, and consistent supply capacity. The initiative is set to start in the 2025/26 academic year and aims to contribute to women's economic empowerment by providing access to stable markets. So far, at least two women-led food businesses in North Lebanon have qualified for participation.

Furthermore, 103 women volunteering in school kitchens received training in food safety and kitchen management, aimed at enhancing their skills towards economic empowerment and self-reliance.

→ SOCIAL PROTECTION CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

WFP and UN Women provided refresher and advanced training to 445 MOSA social workers and field staff across Lebanon on disability inclusion, protection and gender-related topics, including GBV and PSEA. The training aimed, among other things, to strengthen their capacity to apply a gender lens in their roles as social workers. Participants gained essential skills for making safe referrals and unbiased evaluations of disabilities, especially non-physical ones, using the Washington Group of Questions.

2025 & BEYOND

As part of its ongoing strategy to promote Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Lebanon:



WFP will scale up initiatives that support women's economic empowerment. This includes fostering market linkages for women-led businesses and enhancing women's skills to improve their production capacity for increased market share, in partnership with technical organisations.



Building on past experience supporting the Government in integrating GESI, WFP will continue to provide technical expertise in the design and implementation of the National Social Safety Net.



WFP will sustain its advocacy and partnerships to contextualise and integrate GESI in emergency preparedness and response.

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Viviane, a greenhouse farmer in Akkar, is among those receiving technical support through WFP livelihoods activities. She recounts her entrepreneurship journey, highlighting limiting attitudes rooted in social norms associated with gender roles.

Thanks to her determination and WFP's support, Viviane continues to overcome obstacles and serves as a role model to her son, Elias. Inspired by his mother's commitment, 24-year-old Elias participates in her greenhouse business. He was initially hesitant about his mother taking on farming, which is traditionally a male-dominated role but soon recognized the benefits the project brought to their family. This experience has driven him to deepen his knowledge in agribusiness and extension services, aiming to contribute further to their greenhouse farming. The intergenerational influence on youth to embrace farming strengthens family well-being and food production, both essential pillars of food security. Watch Viviane recount her journey on this [link](#).

WFP LEBANON

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