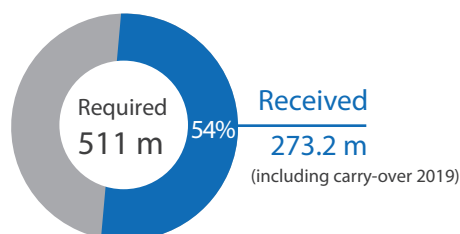


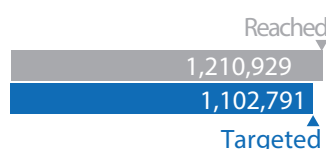


The dashboard summarizes the progress made by partners involved in the Lebanon Crisis Response and highlights trends affecting people in need. The Food Security and Agriculture sector in Lebanon is working to: OUTCOME 1) Promote food availability; OUTCOME 2) Promote food accessibility; OUTCOME 3) Promote food utilization; OUTCOME 4) Promote stabilization.

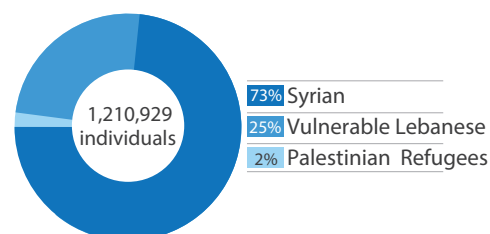
## 2020 Funding Status



## Targeted Population groups

2 m<sup>1</sup> (People in Need)

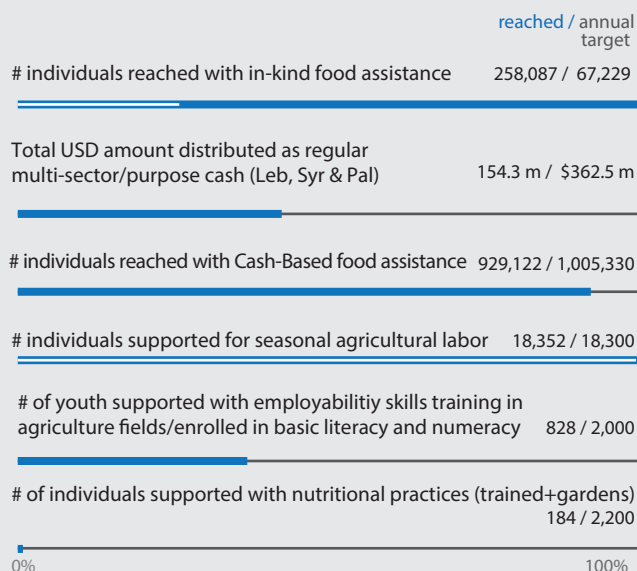
## Population reached by cohort



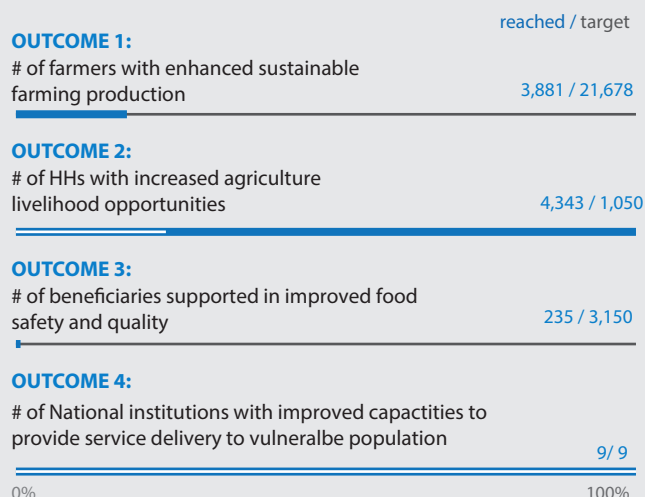
## Progress against targets



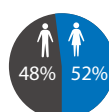
## Key Achievements



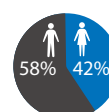
## Outputs/Outcomes



## Age/Gender breakdown



% of vulnerable people reached with cash based food assistance

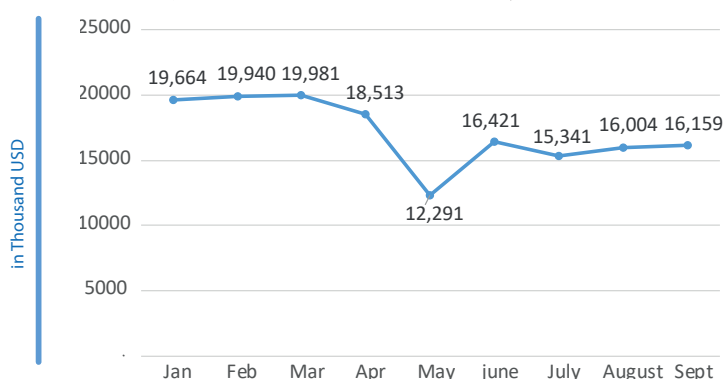


% of youth supported with employability skills training in agriculture fields/ enrolled in basic literacy and numeracy

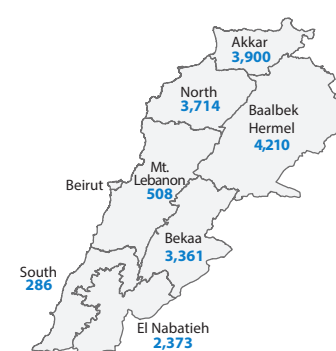


## Analysis

Amount of USD injected in the cash based food assistance system



# of individuals supported for seasonal agricultural labor/casual labor



1- Escalating food and non-food prices inflation and the lack of job opportunities in Lebanon have driven a marked increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty and in need of assistance, to an estimated 2 million across population cohorts. Sources: FSS working group WFP/VAM presentation April 2020 and World Bank FACTSHEET APRIL 21, 2020



## 1. ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SECTOR AT THE OUTPUT LEVEL

The Food Security and Agriculture Sector (FSS) has two overarching objectives in 2020: i) to reduce food insecurity; and ii) to improve the resilience of the agriculture sector to the impact of the Syria crisis. FSS interventions are focused on improving food availability and food access for affected populations. Food availability is achieved through the provision of in-kind food assistance and agriculture production support, while food access is achieved through cash-based food assistance and agricultural livelihoods interventions.

During the third quarter of 2020 (July-August-September), the sector response was shaped by the deepening of the economic crisis, the COVID-19 outbreak, and the Beirut Port explosions on 4th August 2020 and its aftermath. The Lebanese pound (LBP), that had steadily lost value on the informal market since February 2020, reached an all-time low at LBP 10,000/USD at the beginning of July 2020, after which it continued to be highly volatile, reaching LBP 8,000 in September. At the same time, the national average cost of the food Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) registered an alarming increase of 168 per cent between October 2019 – the baseline month, prior to the multiple socio-economic shocks affecting the country – and August 2020.<sup>2</sup>

In the period January-September 2020, a total of 1,187,209 individuals from all population cohorts received food assistance, including 929,122 individuals (W: 52%; M: 48%) through cash-based assistance and 258,087 individuals (W: 53%; M: 47%) through in-kind assistance. In addition to the regular food parcels distribution, Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS), Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and vulnerable Lebanese households also benefitted from ready-to-eat meals, COVID-19-related food distributions and family parcels distributed to the families of the children attending schools where the school feeding programme is implemented.

Many new partners that had not appealed under the sector together with LCRP current partners have continued to provide support targeted to the COVID-19 emergency, mainly through in-kind food assistance. Since April, 58,831 individuals have received food parcels and ready-to-eat meals, ensuring their access to food during a period of isolation or quarantine, movement restrictions, purchasing-power losses and constrained access to food. These activities were reported under a dedicated folder in Activity Info. Forty-four per cent of pandemic-related assistance was provided during the third quarter when COVID-19 cases registered a sharp increase following the Beirut Port explosions; 68 per cent of the assisted were Syrian refugees and 30 per cent Lebanese nationals.

Always under output 1.1 on the provision of in-kind food assistance, WFP provided food parcels to 11,250 Lebanese and Syrian families in the second round of distributions for families whose children attend public schools that are part of WFP's school feeding programme.

Under cash-based food assistance, WFP increased again the transfer value of food e-cards and cash for food between June and July (to 70,000 LBP), due to exchange rate adjustments by the financial service provider, to catch up with the spike in food prices that eroded vulnerable families' purchasing power. The exchange rate adjustment also enabled 82,840 new vulnerable Syrians beneficiaries, previously unassisted, to be reached. A total of USD 154,312,386 have been disbursed by cash-based programs since January 2020 and 811,837 Syrians benefited from food e cards and food vouchers.

Escalating food and non-food prices inflation and the lack of job opportunities in Lebanon have driven a marked increase in the number of Syrian refugees that fall below the SMEB threshold,<sup>3</sup> estimated at 1,245,000 in April 2020, rendering the full-year target of 768,268 vulnerable Syrian refugees somewhat obsolete.

2- WFP VAM & Supply Chain Unit Lebanon National FSSWG–Situation Analysis Monitoring Results for FSSWG Meeting, 13 October 2020

3- From 825,000 to 1,245,000

By the end of September, the sector's annual target for food assistance to Lebanese beneficiaries had already been reached with 279,556 individuals reached vs. a target of 224,591 individuals. This was mainly due to the increase in the in-kind modality assistance that peaked in August 2020 and the increase in the number of households targeted under the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), which allowed the sector to reach 106,000 beneficiaries (15,000 households). A further scale-up of food-assistance to NPTP families is expected to be implemented in late 2020- early 2021.

However, as for displaced Syrians, the sector annual target for food assistance for Lebanese (224,591 individuals) does not reflect the vulnerability changes witnessed during the year. For this reason, the sector raised the number of people in need to an estimated 2 million.

The Beirut Port explosions on 4th of August increased the needs for food assistance and the humanitarian community launched a flash appeal under which also LCRP partners submitted their proposals for funding. LCRP partners have fundraised for those activities outside of the LCRP appeal<sup>4</sup> and at large, they did not re-direct LCRP funds to interventions related to the Port explosions.

Farmers have been severely impacted by the economic, financial crises and the COVID-19 outbreak and in particular by the increase in costs of imported agricultural inputs and the lack of financial resources to purchase them in cash and in foreign currency (USD). The agriculture sector has moved to a low input system, which will likely result in a decline in yields and marketable production. A few partners have therefore stepped in to provide emergency/short term agriculture support interventions, including cash and vouchers programme schemes for farmers, particularly small ones, who have limited access to imported quality agricultural inputs, livestock feed and essential items for the production due to sharp currency devaluation and drastically reduced liquidity. Voucher schemes provide poor, vulnerable and food insecure farmers with a voucher that they can exchange for agricultural inputs at existing suppliers which have agreed to honor the vouchers. The schemes support farmers to maintain their production but also enhance their productivity by facilitating access to quality seeds, fertilizers, hand tools, etc. Partners can rely on the sector guidance note developed by FAO for agricultural inputs voucher schemes.

At the beginning of the third quarter, partners' longer-term agriculture livelihoods activities gradually resumed, but were slowed down again by the wider impact of the Beirut Port explosions, as some partners refocused their activities to assist the people affected by the blast. Activities resumed in September and by the end of the month, a total of 3,881 farmers – cumulative under different interventions - had been supported by sector partners since January, which represents 18 per cent of the annual target. Forty-three per cent of them were involved in the different interventions during the third quarter.

The third quarter witnessed an increase in achievements for agriculture livelihoods activities related to access to markets whereby the bulk of these interventions took place in Q3, with 223 farmers reported having increased access to markets (28%) and having signed contracts with retailers, and/or having access to market infrastructures (72%), since January. At the end of Q2 only 38 farmers reported having increase access to markets, which was at the peak of the lockdown. In the same period, 156 farmers received trainings on improved storage conditions (silos, grain bags, cold storage houses, etc..) contributing to enhancing their access to markets and marketing and therefore improving their livelihoods.

In addition, during the third quarter, 288 farmers received agricultural inputs (seeds, seedlings, equipment, agro-chemicals, etc...) for a total of 575 farmers since January, contributing to enhancing their agricultural production capacity; 260 farmers received financial and/or technical support during Q3 which is usually used to allow farmers to carry out agricultural infrastructure/assets investments and maintain farming activities. Grants were distributed to farmers mainly for land reclamation and water reservoirs construction through the Green Plan and have provided new farmers with an additional source of income. Furthermore, 394 farmers (4 per cent of women) have improved knowledge to conduct profitable farmer businesses within their farms.

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4- According to feedback from partners.

A total of 827 farmers - 30 per cent of which women, which represents 28 per cent of the annual target - were trained on agricultural production practices for vegetables and fruits crops, on natural resources conservation, including water use efficiency and on agriculture value chain development since January 2020. Out of them only 15 per cent (120 farmers) received this support in Q3.

At the end of the third quarter, 566 farmers have been trained on Integrated Pest Management Practices (IPM) representing one third of the annual targets, of which 122 during Q3. The trainings contributed to building farmers' capacity to reduce the use of agro-chemicals in farming practices and pollution of natural resources (soil, air and water) especially along the Litani River (North and Central). This has a positive impact on reducing the pollution of the Qaraoun lake in West Bekaa where the Litani River flows into. The adoption of better practices and practical application of new skills will increase and improve a sustainable, local agricultural production and the natural environment.

Since the beginning of the implementation of the LCRP Food Security and Agriculture sector response plan, several FSS partners have been supporting 278 agricultural cooperatives/associations and/or their members through training and awareness sessions, which represents 90 per cent of the overall LCRP output target. These interventions strengthen the technical and financial capacity of cooperatives to improve service delivery to their members, which will in turn improve local production and farmer-to-farmer coordination and collaboration. After the removal of the lockdown government measures due to the COVID-19 outbreak, 580 members of cooperatives participated in trainings on various topics: management of soil resources, pest management and efficient use of water resources, introduction to cooperatives etc.; 540 among them (65% women, 35% men) participated in trainings on Cooperatives legislation and rules in addition to trainings on Cooperatives Business Schools (CBS) which are an adaptation of the Farmers Business Schools (FBS) approach.

Similarly, since January 2020, 18,352 individuals (one third during Q3) have benefited from temporary or casual labor to build or maintain agricultural assets, in exchange for food assistance, with 60 per cent Syrians and 22 per cent being women. That represent the totality of the target for 2020. Given the impact of the crisis on food security, participants to these schemes received a transfer value to fill households' food gaps, aligned with food assistance programmes' transfer values. Given the impact of COVID-19 outbreak and the Beirut port explosion, the launch of new projects on food assistance for trainings was delayed.

With FSS partners support, youth (aged 15-25 years) have an improved access to better formal and informal technical agricultural education. In total, 80 students (42% girls and 12% Syrians) were enrolled in the first formal agricultural technical schools programme (BT1) of the Ministry of Agriculture during 2020. Students are enrolled in the first year of the formal education of MoA technical schools (BT1) and partners follow-up during the year to check if there is any drop of students leaving.

Five-hundred individuals were enrolled in TVET vocational courses for youth (15-25 years range) (42 percent Syrians and 40 percent women). Among those 500, 89 individuals had reported having access to employment opportunities as a result of formal and/or non-formal education during the first half of 2020, while 159 individuals (54% women and 54% Syrians) reported having greater access to jobs/internships during Q3.

As in previous reporting periods, interventions under the Food Utilization Outcome are still limited and did not increase in Q3: at the end of third quarter a total of 184 Syrian women had received training or attended awareness sessions that improved their nutrition knowledge, which will enable them to improve the nutritional practices of their families; additionally 235 women individuals had had been trained on food preservation/transformation technologies (58% Lebanese, 42% Syrians).

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), with the technical support from FAO, finalized the National Agriculture Strategy 2020-2025 (NAS)<sup>5</sup>, that reflects both the immediate and long-term priorities of the agri-food sector in Lebanon. The NAS long-term vision is to make the agri-food system a main contributor to the achievement of food security and a key driver of resilience and transformation of the Lebanese economy into a productive economy.

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5- <http://www.agriculture.gov.lb/getattachment/Ministry/Ministry-Strategy/strategy-2020-2025/NAS-web-Eng-7Sep2020.pdf?lang=ar-LB> As the country's economic outlook remains highly uncertain, the NAS is purposely considered as a living document, subject to regular monitoring and open to continuous dialogue and updates to ensure relevance and responsiveness to the needs emerging in the rapidly evolving Lebanon context.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Up to **1,187,209** vulnerable individuals received food assistance, exceeding 2020 targets (1,072,559).

Beneficiaries included up to **811,837** displaced Syrians, representing **52** percent females and **48** percent males receiving food assistance through e-cards and food vouchers.

Up to **279,556** vulnerable Lebanese (51 percent men and 49 percent women) received monthly food assistance through e-cards under the National Poverty Targeting Program framework (NPTP).

Up to **24,854** Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS)- **equally divided between men and women** were reached with various food assistance support.

Among the most vulnerable farmers, **2,500** individuals had their capacities improved for farming practices through capacity building received in different thematic areas in addition to 580 members of agricultural cooperatives who received as well technical trainings/awareness sessions on different topics..

Rehabilitation of agricultural productive infrastructure and communal assets have been carried out and consequently, around **110** worksites have been improved.

The total value of investment in agricultural worksite contracted through private sector or implementing partners reached **USD 520,025**.

The Ministry of Agriculture is receiving continuously technical support through different interventions by partners and capacity building of its staff particularly through the agricultural TVET program for the agricultural technical schools and the Green Plan with its decentralized offices.

## Facts and Figures

**92%** Of Syrians displaced HHs present some level of food insecurity<sup>1</sup>

**25%** Of Syrians Displaced HHs with poor and borderline food consumption<sup>1</sup>

**45%** Of Syrians displaced HHs depend on food vouchers/e-cards for income source<sup>1</sup>

**63%** Of Syrians Displaced HHs adopt severe and crisis coping strategies<sup>1</sup>

**55%** Of Syrians Displaced HHs unable to cover SMEB (Survival Minimum Expenditures Basket)<sup>1</sup>

**10%** Of Lebanese HHs vulnerable to food insecurity<sup>2</sup>

**73%** of Farmers in need of agricultural support<sup>2</sup>

**95%** of PRS are food insecure<sup>3</sup>

### References:

1- Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VaSyr 2019)

2- Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment of Lebanese Host Communities (FSLA 2015)

3- AUB / UNRWA 2015

## 2. CHALLENGES

In the third quarter of 2020, the economic situation continued to deteriorate due to the on-going simultaneous fiscal, financial, and monetary crises, compounded by the COVID-19 outbreak and the Beirut Port explosions on 4 August 2020.<sup>6</sup> The Food SMEB recorded its highest price in August 2020 at LBP 103,300 (up 168 percent since October 2019) with Beirut and Mount Lebanon being the governorates recording the most expensive SMEB. The price of the non-food SMEB increased by 170 percent since October 2019. The non-food SMEB recorded an increase of 12 percent between July and August 2020. The inflation due to the currency depreciation and possible removal of subsidies on key basic commodities and fuel pose additional downward pressures on the economic market outlook.

As a result, vulnerabilities are deepening as documented in the m-VAM Vulnerability and Food Security Assessment in July – August 2020. This assessment also projects that food security is likely to continue to be profoundly affected.

Between July and August, 40 percent of households across the country had difficulties accessing markets to cover their food and other basic needs, mainly in Akkar (55%) and Baalbek-El Hermel (48%). Deteriorated purchasing power is the



main reason why households could not make ends meet. The unemployment rate amongst respondents reached 49 per cent in August 2020. The increase was more pronounced among respondents with lower levels of education. Furthermore, 19 per cent of households consumed inadequate diets, with the highest prevalence observed in Akkar (38%), North (27%), and Baalbek-El Hermel (25%).

Assessments on the impact of the economic crisis on agriculture show that urgent emergency assistance is needed.<sup>7</sup> Lebanese small-scale farmers have been seriously affected by the cumulative crises through cost increases for imported agricultural inputs (i.e., seeds, fertilizers and feed) and the lack of financial resources to purchase them in cash and in foreign currency (i.e., USD). Consequently, farmers were forced to use local or uncertified seeds and were unable to contract loans over the agricultural season as in previous years, which has put future cropping seasons at risk. This will have a serious impact on farmers and their livelihoods, pushing them towards vulnerability and hardship.

Food assistance partners received higher volumes of assistance requests across all population cohorts. A number of partners were able to scale up their coverage for Syrian displaced and Palestinian refugees and were able to reach additional individuals in 2020, thanks to the windfall from a preferential exchange rate granted by financial service providers. However, the volume of food assistance requests continues to increase and it is unlikely that partners will be able to continue to scale-up assistance to meet increasing needs, as the spike in number of calls to the WFP-UNHCR call centre requesting food assistance in July 2020 testifies.



### 3. KEY PRIORITIES AND GAPS FOR THE SECOND SEMESTER 2020

It is estimated that 1,320,000 Syrian refugees now fall below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) in 2020, according to VASYR preliminary results. This has left 495,000 Syrian vulnerable refugees unassisted in terms of cash for food and food e-cards.

While in-kind assistance is provided, this assistance is mostly one-offs and does little to close the gap over the longer-term as the situation continues to deteriorate.

At the end of September 2020, the sector was funded at 54 per cent with USD 273.2 M of funding available out of the USD 511 M in the 2020 partner appeal. With a changing context for food security and with increased needs of all population cohorts, this funding gap would need to be narrowed in the 4th quarter to avoid an assistance gap to those most in need.

The referral channels for the sector set up at the onset of the national COVID-19 outbreak have been inundated with requests for assistance; however, many partners do not have the capacity to respond to all referrals because of lack of funding and limited staff. A few partners have been able to respond to the most urgent referrals related to cases under isolation because of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. The Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) allocation for food security is helping to absorb part of the backlog with emergency one-off assistance to those most vulnerable to COVID-19.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, as food needs increase, medium to longer-term food security programmes are needed to support an increasing caseload of vulnerable Syrian, Lebanese and PRS/PRL families.

Agricultural interventions should focus on maintaining the productive capacity of farming households who rely mostly on farming income and increasing their resilience to allow them to continue working on their fields. Although some emergency interventions that target farmers are ongoing (for example via cash vouchers schemes through preselected suppliers), it remains crucial to expand this assistance and include the private sector as its operational capacity will facilitate the medium to longer-term recovery.

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7- FAO (2020), Special report: FAO mission to assess the impact of the financial crisis on agriculture in the Republic of Lebanon 21 September 2020

8- In line with the LHF's person-centered approach, profiles of beneficiary to be considered under this allocation are a) older persons, b) those with serious medical conditions, c) persons with mental and physical disabilities or d) persons with other specific needs (including female-headed households, children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, women and girls at risk including child marriage, and e) those whose needs will be increasingly difficult to meet due to the enhanced and prolonged isolation measures in a context of a deteriorating socio-economic situation. The allocation will provide support to those most in-need among Syrian refugees, Lebanese, Palestine refugees and migrant & domestic worker communities.



### WFP leaves no one behind in Lebanon<sup>9</sup>

Hanan opens the large cotton bag and the scent of thyme fills the air. This is a scent that would take most Lebanese back to their childhood; homemade breakfast, family and simply... home!

In this house, however, the smell of thyme carries a different meaning. Hanan collects and picks the culinary herb herself and sells it to a local tradesman for a modest amount per kg — barely enough to cover her family's needs. The mother of six lives with her family in the farthest district in the North of Lebanon, Akkar. Like many in that area, Hanan and her family were struggling to make ends meet as rural and marginalized Akkar offered few opportunities. Lockdown measures following the spread of the coronavirus and the ongoing economic crisis only made things worse for the family.

"My husband had a hip injury a couple of months ago and our living conditions have deteriorated quickly since then," says Hanan. "My son is in the army, but his paycheck is barely sufficient to support him alone."

Her husband's injury forced Hanan to become the family's bread-winner. Her goal, like any mother's, is to make enough to support herself, her husband and her children. She also works to ensure that her children are in school to get the education she and her husband never received.



Thanks to funds from Italy, Canada and Ireland, WFP was able to help the most vulnerable school children and their families meet their food needs while preserving the linkages between them and their schools.

"We are grateful for the food parcel that is being distributed in our children's school. Without this support, we would not be able to have proper food for a whole month," Hanan explains as she takes out bags of pasta, rice and sugar from her kitchen cabinet. These are some of the essential food items contained in the WFP food box along with salt, oil and lentils.

WFP Lebanon has been distributing locally-produced snacks to children attending public schools since 2016 and, together with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, reached 32,000 Lebanese and Syrian students enrolled in 56 public schools. WFP also rehabilitated six school kitchens to provide fresh meals to an additional 5,000 children attending public schools.

Despite all that is happening, Hanan still wears a big smile on her face. This family's morale has not been brought down by the devastating situation they live in.

"The tradesman who buys my herbs says they are the best and the cleanest in the country," she says proudly as she recollects words of praise during these difficult times.

<sup>9</sup>This story was written by WFP staff and it is published with WFP's permission.