

## Minutes of Livelihoods Working Group Meeting, Beirut 2022



**Inter-Agency  
Coordination  
Lebanon**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Virtual – Teams	<b>Date and Meeting time</b>	14 April 2022 10 am – 12 pm
<b>Chairpersons</b>	Yousra Taleb (UNDP) – Afaf Khalil (MoSA)	<b>Meeting Duration</b>	2 hours
<b>Minutes by</b>	Yousra Taleb, Afaf Khalil		
<b>Represented Agencies</b>	MoET, ILO, ACF, CESVI, NRC, Merath, Relief International, IOM, ACTED, Mercy Corps, World Vision, UN Women, URDA, IRC, JRS, Arcenciel, People in Need, Anera, OXFAM, ARCS, AIMajmoua, SIF, UNFPA, LebRelief, Coopi, Concern, FTL, MUBS, Care Liban, Hilfswerk International, Coordo Liban, MoL, WFP		
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening and Agenda</li> <li>2. Activity Info quality check</li> <li>3. Presentation by ACTED: “Safeguarding women’s essential dignity, self-respect and rights through capacity-building and income generating opportunities in the menstrual hygiene sector” in Tripoli</li> <li>4. Presentation by ILO findings of the survey “The state of covered horticulture in Lebanon”</li> <li>5. Presentation by Oxfam New Policy Brief: "Decent Working Conditions and Contracts in a Collapsing Lebanon: An Overview"</li> <li>6. Inclusive livelihoods (barriers and opportunities)</li> <li>7. Core Group action plan and next steps</li> <li>8. AoB</li> </ol>		

### 1. Opening and Agenda

UNDP Sector Coordinator opened the meeting and presented the Livelihoods meeting agenda.

MoSA sector coordinator welcomed and introduced the newly assigned sector focal point from MoET Mrs. Linda Qassem.

Deviation from agenda: item 6 was postponed to the next working group meeting (June 2022)

### 2. Activity Info quality check

To ensure quality and accuracy check of reports on Activity Info, partners were requested to enter the information (title and outputs) of their ongoing projects in a form that was shared during the meeting. Partners who were unable to access the sheet or were unable to enter all data can do so through this [link](#).

### 3. Presentation by ACTED: “Safeguarding women’s essential dignity, self-respect and rights through capacity-building and income generating opportunities in the menstrual hygiene sector” in Tripoli

*You can find attached the PDF full presentation*

Presented by Nicole Yammine – Livelihoods project manager

The project came as a response to the economic crisis in Lebanon, which is having an impact on women. 42% of women reduced their consumption of hygiene products and replaced them with other products that can be used for periods longer than they are intended for, 17% are using less sanitary means like tissues or clothes, and 36% experience symptoms due to being unable to use or to buy menstrual products or accessing hygiene products. The project has three objectives: 1) Support a local entity in Tripoli to set up a menstrual hygiene pads production line, 2) Create a pathway for sustainable employment for women in a non-traditional sector, and 3) Raise awareness of women and girls on menstrual hygiene.

Discussions:

- As several partners across different sectors distribute hygiene or dignity kits to female beneficiaries, it would be good to link ACTED and Roof and Roots with these partners.
- Partners who are interested in accessing the product can get in touch with Roof and Roots Customer Service: 81-172101
- ACTED is currently submitting a proposal to replicate this intervention in Beirut and the South.
- The livelihoods sector should explore possibilities to scale up similar initiatives in terms of production and distribution.
- In beneficiary outreach door to door visits were conducted where a brochure containing all the information needed were distributed. ACTED also reached out to NGOs operating under GBV services in Tripoli.
- Once phase two of the project in Beirut and the South is launched, ACTED will accept referrals from SGBV and protection partners.
- Despite the successful initiation of the activities more support to Roof and Roots is needed. For example, they can be supported with more machines, raw material, and solar panels to replace the expensive electricity bills.
- A study on women coping mechanism to their inability to buying menstrual products can be found [here](#)

#### **4. Presentation by ILO findings of the survey “The state of covered horticulture in Lebanon”**

*You can find attached the PDF full presentation*

Presented by Nadja Nutz - Technical Officer – Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)

First and foremost, the survey was conducted to serve as a baseline for the AIMS component of ILO PROSPECTS in Lebanon, against which progress, and impact of the programme component will be measured. This survey also presented an occasion to verify how exactly recent shocks have impacted production practices, yields and revenues of horticulture farms and identify possible trends regarding its impact on horticulture farms of varying sizes and in different regions. Finally, the survey hopes to contribute to efforts to generate data and information on the state of agriculture in Lebanon.

Main findings:

- The ongoing multiple crises have impacted farmers and workers severely: the devaluation of the Lebanese Pound has led to rising prices for the imported agriculture inputs and resulted in rapidly increasing production costs, decreasing yields and revenues. Wages of workers are below what is needed to pay for the most necessities. Without social protection or health insurance, workers are left to struggle for their survival.

- There are regional differences regarding market dynamics and markets access (in the scope of this report, it is between Akkar and Baalbeck-Hermel)
- Farmers receive surprisingly little information, guidance and support on markets, production practices and technology that would allow them to increase productivity. Facilitating investments of farmers in these technologies should be a priority.

The report can be found [here](#)

The video with testimonies of farmers that summarize the results can be found [here](#)

Discussions:

- ILO has different information tools that can be distributed to farmers which will be shared with the sector partners for further dissemination.
- Despite the high initial investment needed for multi-span greenhouses compared to the traditional ones, the return on investment of the former is also higher where up to 80% higher revenues can be achieved.
- Multi-span greenhouses are also more environmentally friendly (less need for pesticides), and they provide better working conditions (better ventilation, lower humidity, and heat).
- The lack of financing opportunities is a problem that limits the farmers abilities make new investments. As such, it is important to ensure financial support. For this we need to create a loan capital revolving fund that could be specifically addressed for the agriculture sectors and the small producers. A blended finance approach can be used, i.e., to couple the loan with some incentives that could be either a subsidized loan interest or a grant a top up in cash. Most importantly advocacy should be increased towards donors and INGOs to support the microfinance sector with USD funds.

## **5. Presentation by Oxfam New Policy Brief: "Decent Working Conditions and Contracts in a Collapsing Lebanon: An Overview"**

*The full policy brief can be found in [English](#) and [Arabic](#)*

Presented by Dana Abed – Influencing lead

The brief investigates the decent working conditions considering the current multilayered crisis in Lebanon. Amid the economic crisis and the pandemic, job insecurity is on the rise, with cases of informal jobs becoming more prevalent, and arbitrary dismissals, reduced working hours, and/or reduced incomes becoming more pronounced, impacting vulnerable groups more than others. The Lebanese labor market is characterized by a high level of informality, an absence of explicit and registered work contracts, and an absence of social security coverage for workers, weak legal frameworks, and the lack of job-driven growth.

Some recommendations on improving the employment sector in Lebanon:

- The international community should continue maintaining decent working conditions as a mandatory part of all programs that include economic development and employment. Program design should also include support to MSMEs to implement decent working conditions.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and civil society organizations should include and target employers and employees in awareness programs related to decent working conditions.

- The Ministry of Labor along with civil society organizations should sensitize employees on their rights that are guaranteed by the labor law, starting with the right to establish a contract with their employers.
- The Lebanese government should work on abolishing the Kafala system and grant equal work rights to migrants and refugees. There should be a unification of labor laws in a way that provides a solid legal framework.
- Gender-sensitive laws should be properly implemented and promoted.

## 7. Core Group action plan and next steps

As communicated in previous occasions, the Livelihoods Core Group is working on producing three new guidelines whose topics were identified as priority areas/themes during the sector's reflection sessions in November 2021.

Through a poll, partners voted to the priority sub-topics under each theme. The results were as follows:

- Employability activities: Private sector engagement (15 votes), Vocational training to job opportunities through the support to MSMEs and/or cooperatives (10 votes) and Standardized tools and common defined methodologies for market assessments (5 votes).  
Additional topics suggested: 1) On the job training to beneficiaries to enhance employability and 2) Awareness on decent work principles to both beneficiaries, MSMEs and/or private sector
- Value chains: Identification of key sectors (17 votes), Best practices and approaches - geographical, business clusters... (15 votes), Activities under value chain interventions (13 votes), Unified definition of value chains (9 votes), Identification of regulatory constraints and opportunities within key value chains (6 votes), and Strengthening value chains logistics (4 votes)
- Support to Businesses: Modality of assistance - technical support, in kind, grants, financing, etc. (14 votes), Identification and selection of MSMEs/Cooperatives (10 votes), Access to local and international markets - requirements, opportunities (9 votes), Innovative sources of finance (9 votes), How to move beyond individual business support - supporting an enabling environment, business development institutions, etc. (6 votes) and Clustering (4 votes)

## 8. AoB

None