

November 2022

Roundtable Recommendation

Lebanon Office



Lebanese NGOs and the Challenges of Food Security and Livelihood

Roundtable Recommendation Report

Dr. Elie Mekhael

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Elie Mekhael is Professor at the Lebanese University at the Faculty of Education with a long track record of positions in the government and academia. From 2017-2020, he was responsible for international relations at the faculty of education as well as coordinator of the active citizenship program with British Council and the global citizenship and prevention from violent terrorism program with UNESCO. Mekhael held the position of the General Secretary of the Higher Council of Children Lebanon from 2002-2012, and is frequently an expert for the Arab League for the elaboration of Arab family strategy.

Disclaimer: It is important to note that the recommendations of this report do not necessarily comply with the participating organizations.

Introduction

The National Human Security Forum (NHSF) in collaboration with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and The Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training (LOST) conducted a conference on November 21, 2022, to discuss NGOs' needs to effectively respond to livelihood and food insecurity in Lebanon, as well as exploring ways to strengthen national action response plans and cooperation between local and international stakeholders. The conference held at Bossa Nova Hotel in Sin El-Fil was attended by a variety of stakeholders concerned with food security in Lebanon: representatives of International NGOs, Lebanese NGOs, Ministries, Cooperatives, and Academics (Appendix 1).

Dr. Imad Salamey, NHSF director, presented a scientific documented report¹ on the NGOs' needs assessment in livelihood and food security (Appendix 2). Building on the findings of the report, many ideas emerged from the discussion to improve food security and livelihood in Lebanon. The concluding remarks were summarized by Dr. Elie Mekhael at the end of the conference.

Based on the discussions, the following recommendations were drawn.

Recommendations:

1. Ensuring the synergy of public policies through developing a strategic, regulatory, and guiding document on a National Framework on Food Security which includes strategies and action plans at the central, sectoral, and local levels. The National Agriculture Strategy (NAS) 2020 - 2025 issued by the Lebanese ministry of agriculture can be used as a baseline. (Appendix 3)
2. Ensuring that public policies related to Food Security:
 - › Are consistent with SDG 2030 Agenda and aligned with Paris Agreement. The targets of SDG 2 shall be prioritized and mainstreamed into development and humanitarian plans and interventions; (Appendix 4)
 - › Provide enabling conditions to promote agriculture and the food industry by enhancing the utilization of locally produced products;
 - › Are gender-sensitive (ensuring the equality between women and men in the Food Security sector);
 - › Focus on rural development;
 - › Are inclusive of all societal groups (women, youth, vulnerable);
 - › Are rooted in a clear theory of change.
3. Creating an efficient multisectoral governance structure since the Food Security sector is split under the mandates of several ministries: Agriculture, Economy and Trade, Social Affairs, Environment, Water and Energy, and Finance. Integrate the civil society participation by adopting transparency, sharing information, guiding principles, and quality assurance. In this regard, it is vital to reactivate the Higher Council for Agriculture established in 1954 and establish a Higher Ministerial Committee for Food Security.
4. Establish an action plan for awareness and advocacy on Food Security. Activities that can fall under this plan are disseminating the report findings about the NGO needs assessment, organizing a national conference, assisting farmers by providing orientation sessions, and promoting the procedures and processes on how to establish an agricultural cooperative. NGOs can advocate for: the sustainable use of natural resources, the use of renewable energy, and agriculture insurance to mitigate the impact of climate change and other natural disasters.

¹ A livelihood and food security response survey of 55 active Lebanese Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) was conducted. The objective of this report is to reveal how Lebanese NGOs are responding to the livelihood and food security challenges confronting the country.

5. Institutionalizing the work of all stakeholders in the food security sector by introducing new methodologies of work, networking, and new business models. Hence, more focus will be put on the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved, as well as valorize the governmental institutions that are trying to fulfill their duties within this sector (e.g: Cooperatives Directorate).
6. Guaranteeing Aid Efficiency and Effectiveness through the increase of international support for governmental institutions as well as Lebanese NGOs. Consequently, the rationalization of foreign funding between these institutions and NGOs should be reflected by using transparency mechanisms, accountability, and follow-up measures.
7. Maximizing the efficiency of public finance and public resources. The government should re-initiate the financial operations to provide incentives, subsidies, tax exemptions, and legislation for local NGOs in order to facilitate the service provision.
8. Improving the coordination and networking between local NGOs through empowering them to be the main contributors to the achievement of Food Security. Organizations need to designate a field of competence and specialization, adopt a systemic approach, and review their business model. They shall develop 1) short-term interventions that fill in the humanitarian needs; 2) long-term programs by creating incubators, contractual industry, and agricultural plans; and 3) programs that guarantee the value chain system. As well, NGOs should advocate and participate actively in building an action plan for sustainable agriculture.
9. Ensuring the NGOs' sustainable work by channeling aid to build their human capacities through training their staff in key areas such as planning, management, information, and communication.
10. Encouraging the creation and activation of several platforms related to food security that allows for the exchange of information and experiences. National, public, and regional platforms shall be considered to highlight the importance of localization in the context of Food Security.
11. Emphasizing the important role of municipalities and municipal unions which are well placed to provide information about the inputs, existing, and lacking resources.
12. Improving the private-public partnership in terms of social responsibility, social and economic entrepreneurship, and youth employability.
13. Favorizing the role of the academic sector in networking, providing needed orientations, and facilitating evidence-based decision-making for the stakeholders involved in Food Security. Research-based evidence can be conducted around agricultural practices, the environment, and food security. Universities can provide experienced human resources that can work with local NGOs in 1) providing the needed scientific data; 2) preparing agriculture orientations for farmers, and 3) providing orientation around the food value chain to help create sustainable agricultural practices and sustainable development.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: [List of Participants](#)

Appendix 2: Lebanon's Non-Governmental Organizations needs assessment in Livelihood and Food Security (by Dr. Imad Salamey)

<https://www.kas.de/documents/284382/284431/Lebanon%E2%80%99s+Non-Governmental+Organizations%E2%80%99+Needs+Assessment.pdf>

Appendix 3: National Food Strategy (2020- 2025). Ministry of Agriculture – Lebanon

<https://www.fao.org/lebanon/news/detail-events/fr/c/1308437/>

Appendix 4: SDG 2 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

Lebanon Office
23 Benoît Barakat Str
Jabre Building, 5th floor
Badaro – Beirut
Lebanon
Phone +961 (0)1 388 095/6
Fax +961 (0)1 388 097
info.beirut@kas.de



The text of this publication is published under a Creative Commons license: "Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 4.0 international" (CC BY-SA 4.0), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>