



BASMEH & ZEITOOONEH
RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Terms of Reference – External evaluation

K - Food for Farming for Vulnerable

Introduction:

The external evaluation will be commissioned by Basmeh & Zeitooneh to evaluate the hydroponic project from January 2021 to December 2022 the project was directly implemented by Basmeh & Zeitooneh in Tripoli.

The evaluation has the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the results of the B & Z hydroponics project in terms of effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, coverage, sustainability, and impact (being the most important criteria). This will include assessment and documentation of the project's impact on project participants including case studies
2. To measure the objectives and outcomes of the Hydroponic project.
3. To identify lessons learned and best practices gaps within the project, including recommendations to B&Z for continuous project improvement.

Basmeh & Zeitooneh (B&Z) is a grassroots organization that started in 2012 with a group of volunteers in Lebanon, driven by the struggles Syrian refugees are facing which began as a small relief operation. Within a year the volunteers had set up their organization as a Lebanese NGO and received their first grant to start three different programs in their community center in Shatila, a pre-existing Palestinian refugee camp that was hosting Syrian refugees. Today, after 10 years of growth and development, Basmeh & Zeitooneh has become a reputable Lebanese Association that has more than eight years of experience in working with and through marginalized and underprivileged communities of children, adolescents, youth, caregivers, men, women, as well as the households all residing in Lebanon throughout its grassroots, community-based approach in the main four sectors it is experienced in, Food Security and Livelihoods, Protection, Education, Social Stability. B&Z has also established a strong research and advocacy unit tackling topics on safe and dignified returns of Syrian refugees to Syria and their move back to Lebanon and a civil society enablement approach supporting other smaller organizations and initiatives particularly those led or co-led by refugees who are most fit to lead on the decision-making and fund steering to respond to their own and their communities' needs.

The mission statement in which B&Z is working to achieve its Vision: A constructive society that lives with dignity. Is: Basmeh & Zeitooneh is a refugee-led relief organization responding to the acute needs of displaced & host communities to help people reclaim dignity & claim agency over their lives.

Available documentation:

- Project proposal, work plan, and annexes
- Reports, including the final report
- Reports issued by the Monitoring and Evaluation unit
- Learning workshop reports
- Pre and post-test for training
- FGDs
- Pre and post surveys



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Project Presentation

Project background:

The ongoing crisis in Syria has put tremendous pressure on the coping capacity of both refugees and their host communities, impacting Lebanon's agricultural economy and food production capacity, particularly in the most affected areas of northern Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon does not allow refugees to cultivate the land, which has led to increased food insecurity rates among Syrian refugees and a critical need to assess alternative methods of food production for refugees and vulnerable host communities. Higher levels of food insecurity continued to be associated with higher economic vulnerability. Food-insecure households had lower per capita expenditures and more debt, and they allocated the majority of their expenses to food¹. Food insecurity rates among Syrian refugees have been increasing in Northern Lebanon while more stable in other governorates. Dietary diversity is another major issue that Syrian refugees have been facing, and this is evident by the fact that household dietary diversity keeps on decreasing year after year (from a score of 6.4 in 2015 to 5.6 in 2016), and dropping 2% more in 2018 highlighting the low consumption of different food groups, which directly impacts their wellbeing. One of the least-consumed food groups is fresh produce, which includes fruits and vegetables that are the major source of vitamins and minerals.

Due to legal restrictions and increased deterioration in Syrian refugee household dietary diversity and livelihoods in Lebanon, BasmeH & Zeitooneh will adopt an innovative approach to tackle an increasing concern on nutrition and income generation.

Program Description:

This project contributes to the substantial improvement and impact in the long-term well-being and living standards of 30 direct and 150 indirect refugees, the indirect beneficiaries are the family members of the direct ones calculated based on 5 members per HH according to VASyR (Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees) in 2018, the beneficiaries will be divided to 2 producer groups in Faiha'a Union of municipalities areas North Lebanon. This is achieved through training on hydroponics to produce chemical and 'pesticide-free' environmentally safe vegetables based on a market assessment that will help in selecting proper marketable vegetable production. The market analysis will be based on gap analysis and market mapping according to available resources considering marketing as a key component all over the approach. During the last decade demand for Vertical farming in Lebanon increased due to a lack of land and high contamination of Local production with chemicals and pesticides not to mention also the quality of irrigation water, which is high, and polluted. The awareness of consumers was high and they started looking for safer products, nearly all major points of sales have a space to sell organic products at higher prices and many other NGOs started supporting small producers with specialized markets like "SOUK EL Tayeb" located in central Beirut and selling safe products with higher prices. To meet this demand several private sectors also launched their projects investing in hydroponic Farming. Beneficiaries will be formed into 2 linked producer groups with support from BasmeH & Zeitooneh receiving suitable tailored training and will be provided with basic tools, certified seeds, and infrastructural equipment to begin production. Production from these gardens will be aggregated and supplied to urban known retail chains using a collective marketing approach to reduce costs and increase income and efficiency. This model enables households to increase their income independently and sustainably by creating a positive impact in their lives across a host of vital areas in

1



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need of support. This will be the first step in allowing beneficiaries to become financially independent and therefore able to meet household needs without external support.

The selection of the type of vegetables to be produced will be based on a market analysis that will be conducted in the early stages of the project and will be prioritized as a major component throughout the project with a collective marketing approach to reduce costs, increase income and efficiency, which will market and sell this product to consumers at 10% premium. Farmers markets were also contacted to introduce the proposed project like Souk El Tayeb and The Garden Show, they showed interest in such products and will be ready to include a sales stand in addition to providing sales techniques training for selected members from the producer's groups. They will be contacted and updated from the early stages of the project to build trust with them and will be invited to field visits to the production sites.

The local authorities in the north will be facilitating our activities. Meetings and coordination with the Union of Municipalities were conducted. They welcomed the proposed project and showed interest in facilitating the project implantation process. They suggested several places that can be used as micro gardens that we can select from.

Partners

CAFOD and SCIAF.

Evaluation objectives

Outcomes of the project:

Outcome 1: 30 participants 60% Syrians, 40% Lebanese, 70% men 30% women from the Faiha'a union of municipalities areas have increased their income, are more able to secure their basic needs, and have improved their dietary diversity at the end of 2 years project

Outcome 2: Basmeh & Zeitooneh has developed its capacity to promote and provide access to diversified and quality food, and business planning.

Goals of the project:

The overall goal of the project is to promote and provide access to diversified and quality food, improving the livelihoods of vulnerable landless households through the deployment of micro-gardens to improve the well-being of vulnerable host-community and Refugees.

Evaluation structure

The evaluation will be using the 5 DAC criteria, and answering the related questions:



Relevance & Appropriateness:

- To what extent in which an intervention is suited to the priorities and identified needs of the target groups, (Syrian Refugees and Lebanese population)?
- Does the intervention consider the donor's priorities (CAFOD & SCIAF.)?
- Is the design of the project logical and coherent, and that its planned (or modified) objectives remain valid and appropriate to the overall goal/s?
- Appropriateness focuses on the extent to which an intervention is tailored to local needs and context and compliments other interventions from other actors.
- How well the intervention takes into account the economic, social, political, and environmental context, thus contributing to ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness.
- Does the hydroponic project contribute to a community's own problem-solving and effective decision-making to address local needs, and build community capacity to do so in the future?

Effectiveness:

Effectiveness measures the extent to which a hydroponic project has or is likely to achieve its intended, immediate results. the main questions to be answered are:

- How successful was the project in objectives? Did we meet our targets (planned vs achieved)
- What can be done to make the intervention more effective during the coming months? (Taking into consideration the Lebanon crisis)
- Does the implementation of hydroponic projects take into account the following Key elements?
 - Timeliness. Evaluations should assess to what extent services and items were delivered promptly, and to what degree service provision was adequately supported to achieve objectives on schedule
 - Coordination. This refers to how well various parts of an intervention, often involving multiple actors, were managed cohesively and effectively.
 - Trade-offs. To assess the effect of decisions made during the intervention that may alter the goals or priorities in acknowledged or unacknowledged ways.
 - Stakeholder perspectives. The viewpoint of stakeholders can help identify factors related to the performance of the hydroponic intervention, such as who participated and why, and the influence of the local context.
- When relevant, this should include a comparison with alternative approaches to achieving the same results.

Efficiency:

The measure of the output- qualitative and quantitative-in relation to the inputs.

- Resources allocation informed and timely action, and related to program objectives intended?
- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Was the project implemented most efficiently compared to alternatives?
- Are the human resources adequate for the project?
- Are the investment and recurrent costs justified? Could the same results have been achieved with fewer resources?
- What innovations or new systems has the organization developed to enable them to address the needs?
- Did the relevant staff have sufficient knowledge and training to do their work efficiently and effectively?
- How can we improve our processes during the project? Activities, disaggregation of targets, staff.



- How did we ensure efficiency throughout the project (ie planning, implementation plan, business plan updates, etc.)?
- Finance health: Was the project expenditure done by the plan? Did the project have any delays related to funds? Have you faced difficulties in terms of exchange rates? Challenges over procurement? What about value for money?
- Is CAFOD's support adequate and useful? How? Should CAFOD provide additional support?
- What can we improve for the next year (eg: for the staff involved in the response, workload, etc.) and what do we need to do differently for the next year?
- What is in place in terms of coordination with external actors? How effective was it?

Sustainability and impact:

Sustainability is concerned with whether the benefits of the hydroponic project are likely to continue once donor (CAFOD SCIAF) input has been withdrawn. It includes environmental, institutional, and financial sustainability. It is especially appropriate for longer-term interventions that seek to build local capacity and ownership so management can continue without donor funding. So, the target groups will be able to manage their micro garden and all related business actors.

- How can we ensure the sustainability of the project?
- How can we involve other stakeholders and project participants to ensure sustainability?
- Any need for additional support to ensure the positive sustainability of the project?
- What has been the impact (short/medium / maybe even long term) of the project?
- Were there any unexpected positive and negative impacts?
- How did the project contribute to the resilience of communities?

Methodology

Participation Standard Stakeholders should be consulted and meaningfully involved in the evaluation process when feasible and appropriate. Key stakeholder groups include the project participants program staff, donor/s,

Particular attention should be given to including any marginalized or vulnerable groups. Stakeholder participation in data collection, analysis, reporting, and utilization increases the legitimacy and utility of evaluations, as well as overall cooperation, support, and ownership of the process. It also helps to ensure the evaluation adheres to any donor requirements,

The evaluation will follow the following methods:

1. Desk review.
2. Field visits, focus group discussions, and interviews with key stakeholders (project team, participants, partners).
3. Community consultations.

The overall evaluation will take up to 45 working days.

Evaluator(s)

Profile

The evaluation will be carried out by one External Evaluator meeting the following requirements:

5 years of proven experience in evaluating development projects, especially in complex situations Implemented in politically and financially challenging environments



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- Knowledge and prior experience in evaluating livelihoods programs, and agricultural projects are preferable in Lebanon
- A sound understanding of gender issues, Participatory evaluation approaches.
- Practical knowledge, skills, and experience in project cycle management (PCM), logical framework approach (LFA), outcome-impact-orientation (OIO)
- Knowledge of PSEA policies (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse)
- Prior experience and a track record of writing constructive evaluation reports in English
- Fluency in written and spoken English and Arabic.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Clear financial offer and a technical offer (proposal) outlining the methodology of the evaluation, and evaluation plan (including dates).
 - The financial offer will be assessed first, only the financial offers that pass the evaluation will be passed through the technical evaluation.
- Meet the minimum requirements (as stated under the evaluator's profile)

Expected documents and deadlines

A total of 45 working days from 10 July 2023 to 18 August 2023

- Inception report and the methodology by 10 July 2023
- Draft evaluation report, in English, 15 - 20 pages in length without annexes. Estimated on 31 July 2023, Second draft 10 August 2023
- A final evaluation report and final presentation to all parties (incl. findings, conclusions & recommendations), by 18 August 2023

Note: The schedule can be amended based on the contractual date.

Resources:

Fee for consultancy days, including preparation and site visits, etc...

Budget:

The total Budget for the final evaluation is 6,000 USD

The consultant will present a financial proposal with all the expenses including the field work.

Requirements:

The consultant will act by:

- B&Z -CAFOD&SCIAF contractual agreement



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- Safeguarding policy (B&Z policies)
- Code of conduct (B&Z)
- Security policy (B&Z)

Application process:

Please send us your CV, sample of previous relevant work, financial proposal, work plan, and technical proposal to jobs@basmeh-zeitooneh.org no later than Thursday, June 22nd, 2023.