



Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (SEE) Change

Final external evaluation report

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COVER PHOTO CREDITS

Al Marj, Bekaa, August 2022. Picking and Preparing Roses for Distillation at Salem Farm Social Enterprise Supported by the SEE Change Project. Photo Credit_ Salem Al Azwak, Owner of Salem Farm

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AUTHORS

This report was elaborated by Camilla Guasti and Eleonora Colozza (ARCO) with the supervision of Enrico Testi (ARCO).

ARCO Action Research for CO-development

ARCO is a Research Centre created in 2008 and located at PIN S.c.r.l. *Servizi didattici e scientifici per l'Università di Firenze*. ARCO's experts have knowledge and proficiency in social impact assessment, impact evaluation, inclusive development. ARCO researchers are organized in six strategic unit: Impact Evaluation, Local Development, Inclusive development, Social Economy, Behavioural Insights, and Circular Innovation and Sustainable Commodities, which work in close synergy to offer research, qualified consulting and training services.

ARCO's **mission** is to offer scientific and strategic support to organizations engaged in projects with positive social impact. Our research centre has a decade of experience in the field of monitoring, final and impact evaluation in projects and programmes of international cooperation, strengthened through both rigorous research and training, and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as all related steps, from data collection to the analysis of the implications.

In particular, the present study was jointly carried out by the **Social Economy Unit**, having an extensive understanding in research, implementation and evaluation of enabling eco-systems for social enterprises, the **Impact Evaluation Unit** having a broad experience in evaluating development project/programs worldwide, and the **Inclusive Development Unit**, widely proficient in gender-sensitive impact evaluations.

ARCO c/o PIN S.c.r.l. Servizi didattici e scientifici per l'Università di Firenze

Piazza Giovanni Ciardi, 25

59100 Prato (PO) Italy

Tel: + 39 0574 602561

Email: info@arcolab.org

Website: <https://www.arcolab.org/>

LinkedIn: arco lab

Facebook: @ARCOcentre

Instagram: @arco_lab

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (SEE) Change		
<p>FOCUS</p> <p>The "Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (SEE) Change" project, funded by the European Union and implemented by Oxfam, Beyond Group, and COSV in Lebanon (Bekaa, Nabatieh, Jezzine, North Lebanon and Mount Lebanon), was aimed at enhancing social stability and supporting local economic development.</p> <p>The project pursued the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the role of the Economic Development Policy Unit to influence on policy-making process and donor funding policy for Lebanon through evidence-based advocacy. - Reinforcing Social Entrepreneurship as a response to social and economic challenges of the context. - Contributing to the progress of the legal and institutional framework for Social Entrepreneurship in Lebanon. <p>The project was designed to involve different target groups: community members (including Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian refugees), SEs and new models of social start-ups, SESOs, governmental entities and policy makers. The project was specifically designed and implemented with a particular focus on refugees and to improve inclusion and attention to gender issues.</p>	REFERENCE NUMBER	TF-MADAD/2020/T04.229
	START DATE	14.09.2020
	END DATE	14.03.2024
	LEADER AND PARTNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead applicant: Oxfam Italia • Co-applicants: COSV and Beyond Group • Affiliated entity: Oxfam GB
	COUNTRY	Lebanon: Bekaa, Nabatieh, Jezzine, North Lebanon and Mount Lebanon
	BUDGET	EUR 7.499.908,02
<p>EVALUATION FRAMEWORK</p> <p>The Final Evaluation provided an assessment of project performance in compliance with OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, to foster a process of learning and capitalization.</p> <p>The evaluation methodology applied included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The triangulation of data from literature review, secondary data analysis and desk analysis of project documents. • The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect primary information from key stakeholders involved in the project. • The use of the project Logical Framework indicators to assess outputs and outcomes and combine results with qualitative data collected. • The use of OCED-DAC criteria as a benchmark to assess project results. • The adoption of an inclusive approach throughout the evaluation process with a specific focus on the use of a gender-sensitive approach and a focus on vulnerable groups. • The adoption of an approach strongly emphasizing the learning process of the project evaluation, as a valuable tool for growth and improvement. <p>The Evaluation was guided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Human-based approach, ensuring the alignment of the evaluation process with international human rights standards. • A context-based approach in the construction and implementation of the methodology. • An ethical approach to all research and data collection activities. <p>The results that emerged from the Final Evaluation prepared the ground for the Ex-Post Evaluation that will take place after the end of project activities to evaluate mid and long-term effects the project has contributed to generate.</p>	arco EVALUATOR	ARCO Action Research for CO-Development di PIN S.c.r.l. Servizi Didattici e Scientifici per l'Università di Firenze
	EVALUATION TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk Analysis of shared project documents, studies, research, reports, collected data. Moreover, data collected by the project were used to triangulate information collected. - n. 2 Short Surveys with beneficiary SEs (48 respondents out of 58) and SESOs (32 respondents out of 41) - n. 16 KIIs with project staff and implementors - n. 5 Collective interviews with SJIP Social Initiatives (19 participants out of 21) - n. 1 Collective interview with the 6 community members part of the Monitoring Unit - n. 5 KIIs with key local stakeholders - n. 6 in-depth interviews with selected project beneficiaries to develop case studies (3 SEs and 3 SJIP Social Initiatives) - n. 1 Learning and Capitalization FGD with project staff

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS:

RELEVANCE *Has the intervention done the right things?*

SEE CHANGE WAS RELEVANT TO THE CONTEXTS AND GREATLY ADAPTED TO CHANGING AND CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

The evaluation findings highlight that the SEE Change project demonstrated **strong relevance to the challenging circumstances in Lebanon**. Despite the severe and compounded economic, social, financial, and political crises, the project remained **aligned with its core objective** of contributing to social stability and the local economy. The project focus on supporting social enterprises resonates with the **identified challenges**, the **objectives stayed relevant**, and its **multilevel ecosystem approach proved significant** in addressing the complexity of Lebanon's crisis. Despite the **Consortium's showcased flexibility** in implementation to adapt to the dire circumstances, the **rigid rules and procedures of the project left very little room for exceptions**, a challenging aspect strongly echoed across the evaluation findings.

A NEED-TAILORED AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACH GENERALLY ENSURED THE PROJECT RELEVANCE FOR BENEFICIARIES AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

The **participatory and need-tailored approach employed at all levels of implementation underscores SEE Change's responsiveness to the dynamic and complex needs of its beneficiaries**. Both quantitative and qualitative data from the evaluation activities, coupled with project data, generally **validated the project ability to cater to the needs and priorities of different target groups**, albeit some more than others, with targeted **SESOs priorities being the most challenging to satisfy**.

INCLUSIVE OUTREACH TO ALL TARGET GROUPS

SEE Change showcased **inclusive outreach** with notable data across its main target groups. The **widespread geographic distribution** underlines significant coverage of Lebanon. Additionally, the target groups exhibit a **commendable gender balance**, inclusivity of **PwDs**, involvement of **non-registered entities**, and a **diverse range of economic sectors**.

The large **majority of beneficiary organisations are Lebanese-owned**. **A larger share of refugee-led organisations would have been desirable in pursuance of the project overall objective**. Nevertheless, the dire regulatory challenges that refugee-entrepreneurs face in Lebanon are acknowledged. More, figures positively increase as per the **engagement of non-Lebanese workers** in beneficiary organisations. Finally, for a project self-identifying with a "Community-based approach" perhaps **more effective engagement/incentive strategies could have enhanced community members' participation and retention rates**.

COHERENCE *How well did the intervention fit?*

SIGNIFICANT ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES & STRATEGIES

The project design and implementation were well **aligned with the priorities of the Lebanese context and with the frameworks guiding the country's recovery process**. The project design emphasis on the SSE as a vehicle for social stability and local development in context of crisis is indeed consistent with the **European and relevant international views and priorities**. Additionally, the **EDPU role** and the **advocacy component** of SEE Change were well designed and implemented to **adhere to national and international frameworks**.

ENSURED CONTINUITY, ALIGNMENT AND COHERENCE WITH RELEVANT INTERVENTIONS SHARING SEE CHANGE OBJECTIVES

SEE Change project **capitalised on the experience and lessons learnt from previous initiatives supporting the SSE in Lebanon and its design well reflects this effort of ensuring continuity**. For instance, its **ecosystem approach** follows the design of the MedUP! project¹ and the **community-centred approach** from Badael project². More, the **advocacy component** and discussions on the making of the draft **Lebanese SSE legal framework** picked up where Badael left off at project conclusion. Additionally, the **dual-track sub-granting mechanism** of SEE Change was designed to **provide continuity of the support to SEs** that were previously targeted by EU-funded initiatives. Also, throughout implementation, SEE Change enhanced **synergies and collaborations with other aligned initiatives**.

COHERENT PROJECT DESIGN REFLECTING AN AMBITIOUS MULTILEVEL ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

SEE Change project activities, outputs, and outcomes were **aligned** with the overall project goal and objectives. Although ambitious, the project design well reflects the **intended ecosystem approach**. The latter indeed proved **well coherent** with the complexity of supporting the SSE multi-level and multifaceted ecosystem, especially in challenging contexts such as the Lebanese case.

EFFECTIVENESS *Did the intervention achieve its objectives?*

The evaluation detected, overall, a generally satisfying achievement of the project outputs and outcomes, despite the dire contextual challenges of the country when the implementation took place. Nevertheless, areas of improvement were noted across the project components, as depicted in the table below.

¹ Implemented between 2018 and 2022, the EU-funded MedUP! project (EuropeAid/155554/DH/ACT/Multi) aimed at promoting an enabling environment in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) for the development of the social entrepreneurship sector as a driver for inclusive growth and job creation.

² Implemented between 2017 and 2020, the EU MADAD-funded BADAEL project -*Building Alternative Development Assets and Entrepreneurial Learning*- aimed at social stability and community resilience through enhancing the communities' understanding of socio-economic opportunities and resilience assets, by strengthening the individuals' skills to identify and engage in innovative sustainable solutions, while promoting social entrepreneurship as a mechanism for civic engagement.

SO1: THE POLICY MAKING PROCESSES AND DONOR FUNDING POLICY FOR LEBANON IS INFLUENCED BY THE EVIDENCE- BASED ADVOCACY OF THE EDPU

ACHIEVEMENTS

Evaluation findings indicate a **general consensus on the successful work done by the Economic Development and Policy Unit (EDPU)**. The EDPU **fruitfully contributed evidence-based research that influenced decision-making processes and donor policies**, demonstrating its effectiveness in shaping key strategies and frameworks. Over the years, the EDPU was commended for having established a solid identity and direction, involving extensive engagement with sector experts, NGOs, INGOs, donor community, government institutions, and academic/think tank institutions. In year 3, the EDPU was praised for having played a decisive role in supporting the SEE Change project in establishing the National Task Force for the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in Lebanon.

CHALLENGES & ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The challenges faced by the EDPU include the **staff turnover in the 5 Consortia leadership** which resulted in **frequent negotiations and re-alignments** to adapt research and policy messages. Additionally, there is a noted lack of initiative from EUTF partners and donor in exploring options for EDPU sustainability after the project conclusion, highlighting **concerns about its future**.

SO2: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS STRENGTHENED TO RESPOND TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN BEKAA, NORTH, AND MOUNT LEBANON

ACHIEVEMENTS

Engaged **community Monitoring Unit members** valued SEE Change for **personal and professional growth**, proper training and support, and fostered **positive relationships with SEs**.

The work done to elaborate the **Accountability Framework** was praised for emphasizing SEs' commitment and fostering mutual accountability between SEs and the communities.

CHALLENGES & ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Challenges noted in achieving greater participation and retaining consistent community members' commitment highlighted the **need for more effective strategies for their involvement in designing and planning project activities**. Room for improvement was detected as per the **clarity, ownership and methodological application of the Accountability Framework and the social impact measurement tools**.

The SEE Change project has made **significant strides in supporting SEs across Lebanon**. The majority of SEs express **satisfaction with the provided business development support**, citing its fundamental role in **enhancing their skills**. **Financial support** was reported to have been **adequate** and have **contributed** to their **operational needs**. The project overall **implementation quality** was appreciated by SEs. Notably, the project has **successfully created 242 jobs**, exceeding the recruitment target, and notably contributed to the **legal registration of 4 Syrian-led enterprises**.

Despite the achievements, challenges persist, primarily driven by Lebanon's economic crisis, and findings confirm the **vulnerability of SEs to broader contextual challenges**. SEs lamented **administrative hurdles**, particularly in project documentation and regulatory compliance. Findings detected a need for streamlined data collection processes to alleviate **participation fatigue**. The evaluation also found **missed opportunities** to explore **more innovative financial mechanisms** beyond the subgrant modality, and to **optimise** the piloting of more innovative features like **MSME-SE clustering**.

The piloted **Social Justice Incubation Program (SJIP)** has garnered **remarkably positive feedback from beneficiary social initiatives**. The success stories, such as the school enterprise pilot, have led to collaborations with the Ministry of Education, showcasing the **program's ability to foster partnerships with the public sector**, amid political challenges. The SJIP was praised for having introduced to the social entrepreneurship sector **new models of partnerships and collaborations** between diverse organizations pursuing social goals. The social initiative representatives highlighted **extensive mutual learning and collaboration** within the program, recognizing the program's role in fostering partnerships, problem-solving, and support opportunities.

Despite the achievements, some areas for improvement were identified. Some initiatives found the **subgrant reporting mechanism overwhelming**, citing **administrative complexities and delays in fund transfers**. Limited staffing posed **hurdles for smaller organizations** to actively participate in the programme networking events. Suggestions for improvement include **continuous coaching throughout the reporting process**, and **clearer agendas for the networking events**, especially for small-sized organizations. The **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)** process faced **criticism for its burden on beneficiaries**, calling for more efficient coordination of the data collection process.

The majority of **SESOs** reported **significant contributions from the project** to their growth, acknowledging its fundamental role in **strengthening their skills and improving networking connections** within the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. The project successfully provided **useful technical resources** resulting in **favourable responses from SESOs**. The **SEEN platform and Learning Toolkits** were highlighted as major achievements, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing (even beyond the project completion).

Challenges in targeting SESOs to join the capacity building programme resulted in a **smaller participation turnout** than expected. Project staff noted a **missed opportunity to fully exploit the project potential at the MESO level**. Perhaps in the **absence of a greater project support to secure SE clients and to market their service**, **SESOs expressed a need for more funding opportunities**. Challenges in selecting an effective supplier for the SEEN platform led to **delays and little time for validation and user testing**. Indeed, **complex procurement procedures** challenged the project implementation. Concerns were raised about the **delayed implementation of the Practice-based research**, questioning its usefulness in timely and effectively capturing learnings.

SO3: LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SE IN LEBANON IS ADVANCED

ACHIEVEMENTS

Despite facing significant internal and external challenges leading to **significant implementation delays**, the last year of project saw **some progress** in the advocacy component. The establishment of a **National Task Force for the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)** in Lebanon was remarked as a notable achievement. The Task Force, **expected to act as a representative body for the SSE Lebanese sector in the upcoming years**, focuses on developing an **advocacy and action plan for the SSE ecosystem (EAAP)**, as well as **advancing the draft Social Economy law**. The project was commended for having **positively influenced discussions on social entrepreneurship** and the handover of SEE Change legacy to the Task Force is generally **seen as a successful exit strategy of the project**, with **positive expectations** of contributing to the growth of a more structured SSE ecosystem in Lebanon. Yet, the delay of this project component hinders a comprehensive and effective evaluation at this time.

CHALLENGES & ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The advocacy component was **greatly challenged** due to **Lebanese governmental instability** and consequent **donor's initial halt** of all advocacy activities in year 1. On top of this, a **significant divergence in vision within the Consortium** impeded the consensus on the strategy and priorities for advancing the draft Social Economy law, leading to a change in leadership for the project advocacy activities and consequent greater delays.

While many interviewees expressed optimism about the Task Force establishment and mandate, **caution was advised regarding the future draft Social Economy law**, considering historical challenges in law implementation in Lebanon. More, some stakeholders believed **involving government authorities in the Task Force** would have ensured greater sustainability.

EFFICIENCY *How well were resources used?*

CONSOLIDATED CONSORTIUM'S EXPERTISE AND A MULTIFACETED ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The implementation of the SEE Change project benefited from a **committed, and skilled partnership**, showcasing **significant on-the-ground experience**.

The **overall collaboration within the Consortium to achieve project objectives received praise**, despite the **need for collective efforts to align sometimes diverse working methods and visions** (notably on the advocacy level component). Against this backdrop, it was highlighted the **need for stronger strategic guidance** from the Steering Committee throughout project implementation, as well as the **need for a more consistent guidance and transparent dialogue with the donor**.

Over the intervention lifetime, the overall **project governance and management** received **positive assessments** from beneficiaries and implementors. The former generally expressed **high satisfaction with SEE Change project staff's management of on-the-ground activities**, citing **positive feedback on responsiveness and proactive support**. The evaluation **found room for improvement** in the **design and efficient management of the internal M&E system and overall data collection activities**. Indeed, a more harmonized and streamlined design could have enhanced the data collection efficiency and cost-effectiveness and alleviated the responding fatigue of beneficiaries. **Internal coordination and communication** were **sometimes challenged** particularly in the last year of the project, notably with a **change in project coordination** amid a significant number of activities rolling out.

Some respondents noted a **sub-optimal overall visibility of SEE Change** which **could have benefitted from a more comprehensive and coordinated communication strategy from the project outset**.

Additional efficiency challenges arose from **difficulties in complying with the project bureaucracy and strict rules and procedures**, leading to **operational challenges** across various project components and target groups.

AN OVERALL COST-EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION, WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The evaluation revealed **generally sound resource allocation and budget optimization** within the SEE Change project. **No significant challenges** were identified in partner-specific allocations, and the budget was generally deemed adequate for the implementation of the activities, apart from the voiced need for additional human resources for specific tasks.

Areas for improvement were identified in resource allocation, particularly in involving community members and managing M&E activities more efficiently.

MULTIPLE DELAYS AND POSITIVE ADAPTATIONS, WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

In the face of a critical national situation leading to **unavoidable delays and adaptations**, the **Consortium successfully navigated challenges to achieve project goals**. However, additional factors contributed to significant project delays.

Notably, **one partner was not granted the donor's waiver** needed for its in-house experts to operate. Coupled with **complex procurement processes**, this resulted in prolonged hiring of external consultants and a need to realign activities.

At the macro level, the **advocacy component** suffered from great delays as it faced **considerable setbacks due to Lebanese governmental instability** (and consequent halt of advocacy activities) as well as an **internal vision misalignment** within the Consortium.

Micro and meso level delays were indeed also experienced and positively addressed. The evaluation considers worth reflecting on the **quite late implementation of the MSME-SE clustering activity**, a delay potentially limiting its effectiveness given its experimental nature. Additionally, the **delayed implementation of Action-learning and Practice-Based research** somewhat **undermined their original project design purpose**, although they may still offer valuable insights for future interventions.

SUSTAINABILITY *Will the benefits last?*

The evaluation findings indicate **positive aspects in various dimensions of sustainability**, but **challenges and areas for improvement**, especially in funding and institutional sustainability, **need consideration** for the future.

TECHNICAL SUSTAINABILITY

The project was commended for being a **rich learning journey for the Consortium**.

More, SEE Change **successfully built key skills and capacities** of engaged community members, beneficiary SEs, social initiatives, and SESOs.

Successful project outputs and tools were praised for their **continued usefulness**, such as the **SEEN platform, Learning Toolkits, business development tools** and **social impact monitoring tools**.

INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

The **creation of the SSE Task Force** is considered a significant milestone, expected to act as a representative body and reference point for the sector. Efforts are underway to **align the Task Force initiatives with national and international frameworks**, although **concerns** linger regarding its **funding sustainability post-project** and its **lack of involvement of government authorities**.

Stakeholders show **high expectations for the proposal of the draft Social Economy law** in Lebanon, anticipating its significant contribution to the growth of the social entrepreneurship sector. However, the significant delay of the project advocacy component hinders the possibility to currently assess the likelihood of the law advancement.

More, respondents acknowledged the impact of the **EDPU's research outcomes** in informing and shaping key frameworks and strategies at both national and international levels. Despite these successes, findings reveal a lack of initiative from EUTF partners and donors in actively exploring options for the EDPU's sustainability post-project, **creating uncertainty about its future**.

Despite the prevailing political instability, a notable success story emerges under the **SJIP**, where the school enterprise pilot exceeded expectations, leading to the **Lebanese Ministry of Education entering into MoUs** to expand the model to additional technical vocational institutes, indicating encouraging prospects for the future.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The project has **strengthened the capacities of SEs, social initiatives and SESOs**, displaying **promising signs of their business/initiatives' sustainability**. Nevertheless, social entrepreneurship actors are inevitably **exposed to much vulnerability** due to the current Lebanese financial, social and political crisis, and therefore generally **calling for continuous financial and technical support**.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

The project was commended for having effectively **increased awareness of social entrepreneurship among target groups**.

Monitoring Unit members have enhanced their understanding of social entrepreneurship, acknowledging challenges faced by SEs and expressing commitment to sustaining these efforts. Interviewed **SEs and SJIP initiatives** demonstrate a strong awareness of the benefits they bring to their communities, and commitment to continue pursuing their social goals. Same commitment to social entrepreneurship was voiced by interviewed **SESOs**.

Even the **Consortia** expressed dedicated pledges to continue supporting social entrepreneurship, drawing inspiration from SEE Change's lessons and achievements.

Finally, the **SSE Taskforce** indicate **promising buy-in and ownership from key stakeholders of the SSE ecosystem**.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

3RF:	Lebanon Reform Recovery and Reconstruction Framework
EAAP:	Ecosystem Advocacy and Action Plan
EU:	European Union
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
KIIs:	Key Informant Interviews
LCRP:	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LSE:	Lebanese Social Enterprise Association
MU:	Monitoring Unit
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PwD:	People with Disabilities
SEs:	Social Enterprises
SESOs:	Social Economic Support Organisations
SJIP:	Social Justice Incubation Program
SSE:	Social and Solidarity Economy
ToR:	Terms of Reference
ToT:	Training of Trainers
UNGA:	United Nation General Assembly
UNTFSSSE:	UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy

1 SEE CHANGE PROJECT

Lebanon is witnessing a complex and multifaceted crisis encompassing economic, social, financial, and political challenges since the outbreak of uprisings in 2019. In the following years, factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut port explosion, government resignation, and external factors like the Russian invasion of Ukraine have exacerbated the situation.

The absence of a functional government is worsening the socio-economic decline, marked by a contraction in Real GDP and a depreciation of the Lebanese Pound. Moreover, Lebanon's banking system failure has resulted in a dollarized cash-based economy, hindering recovery and perpetuating social inequality.

The country faces additional difficulties, including hosting a large number of refugees intensified by the Syrian crisis. Adding to the complexity, the region observed intensified instability following the Israeli-Hamas war in October 2023, positioning Lebanon at the forefront of potential regional escalation.

In this challenging context, the 36-month project **Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (SEE) Change**, co-funded by the European Union, has been implemented by Oxfam, Beyond Group and COSV in Lebanon. The project was initially designed to cover the governorate of Bekaa, North and Mount Lebanon and then was extended to also include the South (Jezzine and Nabatieh). The project began in September 2020 and will end in March 2024 (following approved no-cost extensions), albeit all activities are expected to conclude by December 2023.

The project was aimed at **enhancing social stability and supporting local development** through the achievement of the following specific objectives:

1. Strengthening the role of the Economic Development Policy Unit (EDPU).
2. Reinforcing Social Entrepreneurship.
3. Contributing to the progress of the legal and institutional framework for Social Entrepreneurship in Lebanon.

The **empowerment of the Economic Development Policy Unit (EDPU)** was meant to strengthen its role of leading policy discussion on socio-economic development to influence Lebanon's policy-making process and donor funding policies. This objective was pursued by the unit delivering **relevant evidence-based research for programmes**, offering program-specific and broader policy-related recommendations.

The objective of **strengthening of Social Entrepreneurship** was pursued through a **multi-level intervention** which encompassed the provision of financial and technical support to existing **SEs** and the implementation of a Social Justice Incubation Program (SJIP) for new **social initiatives**; the improvement of the technical capacity and collaboration of **SESOs**; and the active engagement of **community members** in supporting the social entrepreneurship across targeted regions.

Finally, the project objective to **advance the legal and institutional framework for the SSE** in Lebanon was pursued by facilitating the development of a common **advocacy strategy** shared by SSE ecosystem and the provision of capacity building to increase **knowledge and skills** of the future SSE governance structure.

2 EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The Final Evaluation was carried out to return a **comprehensive assessment of SEE Change performance** and an insightful overview of the main results achieved by the project. The overarching aim of the Evaluation was to **promote a fruitful process of learning and capitalization**, building on encountered challenges, underlining lessons learnt and good practices to inform future interventions.

The Evaluation process assessed the compliance of the project with the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, according to **OECD-DAC evaluation criteria**. The evaluation examined the **overall quality of project** design, planning, implementation, management and monitoring and the achievement of project objectives and outputs. In addition, it also identified **external and internal factors** that influenced project implementation evaluating how they were managed by project implementors. Finally, the Evaluation provided an overview of **valuable lessons learnt and practical recommendations** for future initiatives. The process of evaluation was designed by ARCO coherently with the objectives required in the Terms of Reference and was structured following three streams of analysis: the assessment of project performance and compliance with OECD – DAC criteria; the identification of strengths and weaknesses of the project and internal and external factors affecting its implementation and the development of a learning and capitalisation process.

The evaluation methodology, described in Annex 2, included:

- The **triangulation of data from different sources**: literature review, secondary data analysis and desk analysis of all project documents that were shared by the Consortium.
- The combination of **qualitative and quantitative methods** to collect primary information from key stakeholders involved in the project. Data collected were analysed both in an aggregate and disaggregated form.
- The use of the **project Logical Framework indicators** to assess outputs and outcomes and combine results with qualitative data collected.
- The use of **OECD-DAC criteria** as a benchmark to assess project results.
- The adoption of an **inclusive approach** throughout the evaluation process with a specific focus on the use of a gender-sensitive approach and a focus on vulnerable groups.
- The adoption of an approach strongly emphasizing the **learning process** of the project evaluation, as a valuable tool for growth and improvement.

The results that emerged from this Final Evaluation will lay the basis for the **Ex-Post Evaluation** that will take place after the end of project activities to evaluate the mid and long-term effects the project has contributed to generate specifically for beneficiary SEs, SJIP initiatives and community members.

2.1 LIMITATIONS & CHALLENGES

This section summarises the main limitations and challenges faced during SEE Change evaluation process. First, due to the outbreak of the Israeli-Hamas war in October 2023 and concerns about potential escalation in the MENA region, the **evaluation fieldwork in Lebanon** (planned in October 2023) **was cancelled** by Oxfam Italia in cooperation with Oxfam in Lebanon team, acknowledging that there were no conditions in place to guarantee the security of the evaluators during the fieldwork. Consequently, the evaluators changed the proposed methodology and shifted to an online modality the data collection activities originally planned on the field.

Additionally, a **sub-optimal management and coordination of the overall internal and external M&E system and data collection process** of the project generated the following issues (→ Efficiency & Recommendations):

- Firstly, while data collection served diverse and commendable purposes in SEE Change, the evaluation identified a **redundancy and sub-optimal coordination and management** of some data collection activities at the **micro level**, which burdened the beneficiaries resulting in survey fatigue. Evaluators question whether this may have potentially affected the quality of some data collected from beneficiaries, as they could have “rushed” certain survey responses.
- Secondly, in response to the Consortium's request during the Evaluation Inception Phase to prevent overwhelming data collection from beneficiaries, the Evaluators strongly streamlined their data collection tools and integrated them with other project assessment processes (such as the Practice-based research), to eventually later triangulate findings with already collected data by the project. However, challenges arose for the data triangulation due to **sometimes unclear available data or delayed data sharing and suboptimal systematization of comprehensive data sheets**.

Furthermore, the Evaluation timeline suffered **delays due to sometimes sub-optimal responsiveness** from the project management and **significant delays in sharing requested/available project documents and data**. For this reason, the delivery of the final version of this report was postponed in accordance with Oxfam Italia from December 22nd, 2023, to January 2024.

Finally, it is important to note that the Evaluation process took place from September to December 2023 while **several project activities were still ongoing or planned to be held in the final months of the project**. This **partially limited the assessment** of the project performance concerning specific project results or outcomes (i.e., Impact4Policy and COSV dissemination event, the final findings of the Social Value Index for SJIP Social Initiatives and the final results of SEs' social impact measurement; the outcomes of MSME-SE cluster activities and of the additional technical support delivered to selected SEs, as well as the latest development of the SSE task force work, including EEAP Plan and the draft Social Economy law).

3 EVALUATION FINDINGS: OECD DAC CRITERIA ANALYSIS

3.1 Relevance

Is the intervention doing the right things? The extent to which the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries, stakeholder and their context needs, policies, and priorities, and continued to do so if circumstances changed.

SEE Change was relevant to the context and greatly adapted to changing and challenging circumstances

“ We basically have no perception on stability. No one really cares for us. We literally fight in order to survive, and anyone who works for society and with social groups will always be searching for any kind of organization that can help. ”

Community Monitoring Unit member interviewed by ARCO

This quote was extracted from a collective interview to Lebanese community members engaged in SEE Change project during the final evaluation data collection activities. Far from undermining the project general objective - namely, to contribute to social stability and local economy in targeted regions - the evaluators found this severe statement to be strongly emblematic to **validate the project overall relevance**. Indeed, **contributing to social stability and the local economy in Lebanon is not only relevant but also essential for the country's growth and resilience**.

SEE Change project timeline (September 2020- December 2023) has run mostly in parallel to **Lebanon's unprecedented compounded and protracted economic, social financial, and political crisis** since October 2019, with the outbreak of the popular uprisings in the country. The already severe context was further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (February 2020), the destructive explosion at the Beirut port (4 August 2020), the government's resignation in August 2020, the Russian invasion of Ukraine (February 24th, 2022), among others. With the absence of an operational government, the socio-economic situation continues to worsen. The World Bank Spring 2023 Lebanon Economic Monitor found that Real GDP is estimated to have contracted by 2.6% in 2022 after a cumulative four-year decline of 37.2%. The Lebanese Pound continues its sharp depreciation, losing over 98% of its pre-crisis value by February 2023³. Inflation, averaging 171.2% in 2022, is driven by LBP depreciation, notably affecting food prices. The banking sector remains insolvent, with losses exceeding US\$72 billion, while the ineffective nature of monetary tools and a multiple exchange rate system, contribute to economic distortions. Indeed, project data showcases that beneficiary social enterprises (SEs) rated the exchange rate and the inflation as the two direst challenges affecting their business (nearly 100% and more than 80%, respectively)⁴. The systemic failure of Lebanon's banking system has led to a largely dollarized cash-based economy, hindering recovery and posing risks of money laundering and tax evasion, among others. The report concludes that **this status quo perpetuates social inequality and instability**. This scenario is worsened by **the refugee management challenge** the country faces, particularly since the Syria crisis. Lebanon remains the country hosting the largest number of refugees per capita and per square kilometre in the world, hosting 1.5 million Syrian refugees and 489.000 Palestinian refugees mainly seeking shelter in vulnerable areas like Bekaa and North Lebanon, which already experience high poverty and unemployment rates and low public spending on essential services, rising anti-refugee rhetoric at all levels⁵. This situation has intensified existing socio-economic challenges, leading to perceived competition for limited job opportunities, as well as resources, services and utilities. Adding enormous instability, following the disruption of the Israeli-Hamas conflict (October 7th, 2023), Lebanon is now at the MENA region forefront in case of a potential escalation of the war.

Against this backdrop, **the project objectives have remained (and became more) undoubtedly relevant**. More, given the multifaced and compound crisis the country is undergoing, **the project design, albeit ambitious, confirms to be relevant in addressing the complexity of the context through a multilevel ecosystem approach intervening at micro, meso and macro levels⁶** (→ Coherence).

More, albeit the contextual conditions in which the project was implemented were severely altered compared to the circumstances during which the project was designed, overall, collected data and information from project implementors and beneficiaries confirm that **the project was able to adapt its overall design and implementation strategy to the evolving and extremely challenging context in Lebanon**. This required **much flexibility and adaptability** from all project implementors which, however, did not substantially alter the project design and pursued objectives. Examples of adaptability strategies encompass, as an example, the shifting to online modalities for many project activities (i.e., trainings on social entrepreneurship for community members held via an e-learning platform, a change which actually facilitated a broader outreach, intensive negotiations with local banks for the subgrants disbursement, among many others). The evaluation found that, despite remarkable flexibility from project implementors, however, significant challenges were imposed by the **project rigid rules and procedures**. For example, lengthy amendment processes and strict financial regulations left **very little room for exceptions** that could have been beneficial in such a challenging context (→ Efficiency).

³ Source: World Bank, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon/publication/lebanon-economic-monitor-spring-2023-the-normalization-of-crisis-is-no-road-for-stabilization>.

⁴ Source: project documents_ SEE Change business profiling&baseline_November 2022-January 2023

⁵ Source: Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, 2023 Social Stability Update- <https://data2.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/100646>. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations- https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/middle-east-and-northern-africa/lebanon_en#facts-figures.




⁶ Conventionally, the **Micro level** refers to the project activities A2.11; A2.1.1; A 2.1.3; A 2.2.1; A2.3.1, targeting community members, SEs and social initiatives. The **Meso level** refers to the project activities A 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.5.1;3.1.1, targeting SESOs and existing networks working on SE. The **Macro level** refers to the project activities A 3.2.1; 3.2.2, in addition to the activities related to the EDPU work (A 1.1.1; 1.2.1; 1.2.2) → Annex 1_ SEE Change Result Chain.

SEE Change need-tailored and participatory approach ensured its relevance for beneficiaries and local stakeholders

Quantitative and qualitative data collected during the evaluation activities, as well as project data, overall confirm that **SEE Change was generally able to address and tackle** beneficiaries and stakeholders’ needs. The evaluation found this result to have been favoured by a strong emphasis of the **project design and implementation approach to tailor and adapt activities based on preliminary participatory need assessments, feasibility studies**, as well as **participatory/co-creation processes**, across many project components and with different target groups.

The following insights highlight key examples, albeit non comprehensive, of such participatory and need-tailored approach across different project activities at all levels of implementation.

Table 1_ Key examples of SEE Change need-tailored and participatory approach

KEY TARGET GROUPS	SEE CHANGE EXAMPLES OF NEED-TAILORED & PARTICIPATORY APPROACH	PROJECT BENEFICIARIES’ FIRST-HAND ASSESSMENT OF SEE CHANGE PROJECT RELEVANCE
Community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members themselves carried out the community research informing the accountability framework. More, they contributed first-hand to the adaptation of monitoring tools used to track SEs’ performance as per their social objectives’ progress indicators throughout the project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 6 Monitoring unit members participating to the evaluation FGD collectively agreed upon the assessment of SEE Change project as being a useful experience (→ Effectiveness), therefore confirming its relevance.
SEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collaborative and participatory SEs’ need assessment report was carried out involving a diverse pool of SEs and stakeholders to have a general overview of their needs and priorities to better inform the technical support to beneficiary SEs. • The business development support programme was tailored by the business development SESO service provider to the results of another need assessment to determine the maturity and profile of each SE. In addition, a thorough monitoring and evaluation was carried out with each single SE throughout the entire business development support process. • The specialised technical support delivered to 27 selected SEs in the last months of the project was tailored to their previously identified specific needs. • The project Community Monitoring Unit (MU)⁷, who regularly followed-up and monitored beneficiary SEs, adjusted indicators as needed/pertinent throughout the process and addressed their specific challenges as they arose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large majority of respondent SEs assessed the business development support delivered by the contracted SESO service provider as either “fundamental” (42%) or “Quite useful” (52%) to strengthen the skills needed to manage their business more effectively and efficiently (Source: ARCO’s evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48). This confirms that the support did address their skill gaps. • As per the financial support, SEs responding to the survey strongly agreed (71%) or agreed (29%) that the grant was useful for their enterprise. More, 27% “strongly agreed” and 58% “agreed” that the grant amount was adequate to meet the needs for which they requested it. Still, not surprisingly given the external context, the survey detected multiple requests for an increase in the grant amount (Source: ARCO’s evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48). • Some respondents voiced the desire for the support to continue, hence once again confirming its relevance (Source: ARCO’s evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48) • Another interesting indicator that can confirm the relevance of the project support for SEs is their significant level commitment to their proposed project workplan. 60% of beneficiary SEs were assessed by the Oxfam staff as overall highly committed (scoring 61 points or above)⁸. A disaggregated analysis⁹ of SEs scoring high level of commitment did not find significant difference between women-led and men-led SEs, nor between different levels of business development stage, geographical location or nationality.
Social initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conception of the Social Justice Incubation Programme (SJIP) stemmed from findings derived from an ecosystem feasibility study that engaged diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The almost totality of beneficiary social initiative assessed the SJIP as either “Extremely useful” (45%), “Quite useful” (50%) or “Useful” (5%) (Source: ARCO’s online pool

⁷ The Community Monitoring Unit was formed by selected community members previously engaged in previous project activities (i.e., the 5 community research across different areas of Lebanon laying the foundation for the elaboration of the Accountability Framework). During Year 3 of the project, these members carried out regular field visit to monitor supported SE and their progress against pursued social objectives through project-developed monitoring tools.

⁸ Beneficiary SEs were regularly monitored by Oxfam team, the SESO service provider delivering the business development support and the Monitoring Unit throughout project implementation. In summer 2023, additional top-up funding was disbursed to 21 selected SEs that met specific criteria. The latter encompassed SEs’ advancement in scaling up, progress in social impact development, commitment to their proposed project workplan, verified financial needs, and successful assessments. The objective was to channel the additional funding towards SEs that demonstrated significant potential in fostering inclusive development, community participation, and social innovation. The “commitment” criterion evaluated the willingness and receptiveness of the social enterprise and its team members to acquire new knowledge, skills, and insights (scoring ranging from 1 – no commitment- to 100 points – highest level of commitment).

⁹ Project data used for the analysis was drawn from the profiling of beneficiary SEs between November 2022 and January 2023.

	<p>stakeholders. Through this process, the SJIP aimed to uncover untapped needs and challenges within the ecosystem, identifying gaps and opportunities suitable for piloting innovative partnership mechanisms with the potential to influence policy change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the SJIP co-design phase, a preliminary assessment was conducted to identify organizations poised and prepared to embrace the innovative aspects of the program. This phase also played a pivotal role in fostering networking and connections among these organizations, facilitating the exploration of areas and opportunities for meaningful collaboration to kickstart with the SJIP. 	<p>to beneficiary social initiatives during collective interviews, N= 20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some social initiatives highlighted how the SJIP represented a unique and unprecedented opportunity to be financially and technically supported (i.e., for non-registered entities) confirming addressed needs. • Multiple respondents voiced the desire for the support to continue, hence once again confirming its relevance.
<p>SESOs</p> <p>MESO LEVEL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two comprehensive need assessments were conducted for SEs and SESOs, engaging a broad and diverse range of stakeholders within the Lebanese ecosystem. These assessments guided the development of the SESO capacity-building program, which was crafted through an interactive, participatory, and co-creative process, encompassing both program content and delivery methods such as online meetups, one-to-one coaching, and validation sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 80% of respondent SESOs stated that the support provided by the project was relevant to their needs, as well as to their organisation’s context and operations and macro-level environment (Source: RPS MENA_SESOs’ survey, N=32) • However, when asked which aspects could have improved of the capacity building programme, 75% of respondents stated: “more funding opportunities” (Source: RPS MENA_SESOs’ survey, N=32). It is to be noted that SEE Change project did not envisage direct funding support to SESOs, while its design foresaw a direct support to market their support services to beneficiary SEs (eventually implementation was run differently → Effectiveness). These findings fed a more in-depth reflection during the evaluation learning & capitalisation FGD with project staff concerning future interventions strategies (→ Recommendations).
<p>Members of the Lebanese SE ecosystem</p> <p>MESO/MACRO LEVELS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feasibility study was carried out to assess needs and gaps and social entrepreneurship sector in order to feed the design and functionalities of the SEEN platform¹⁰. More, an interactive and open-feedback approach with users positively fed and improved the platform features. • Multiple stakeholder and community consultations informed the advocacy component of the project and the conversations on the draft Social Economy law. • The establishment of the SSE Task Force entailed a participatory and co-creation process with stakeholders and different representatives of the sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some interviewed project staff emphasised how the SEEN platform responds to the need to bring together various stakeholders in the Lebanese SSE ecosystem to promote collaboration and unity of efforts. • The need to have a representative and governing body for the SSE sector in Lebanon was voiced multiple times from various evaluation respondents, especially given the lack of a much-needed SSE legal framework in the country. • Furthermore, the diverse composition of the Task Force was signalled as a positive indication that the development of the Ecosystem Advocacy and Action Plan (EAAP), along with the draft Social Economy law, will be representative of the Lebanese Social Economy ecosystem.
<p>EDPU members</p> <p>MACRO LEVEL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 6-months co-creation phase redefined the EDPU’s terms of reference and main strategic objectives, given contextual changes. The participatory process was key to determining the operational dynamics and working protocols of the EDPU, as well as its research agenda, the Communication and Influencing Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of respondents reported being very confident and 50% confident about the continued relevance of EDPU products and activities for the Lebanese livelihood sector (Source: project documentation - EDPU 4th perception survey -May 2023).

Source: ARCO, including elaboration of data collected by SEE Change project

Inclusive outreach to all target groups

The following tables summarise **key overall and disaggregated data on SEE Change main target groups** - SEs, community members, social initiatives, and SESOs - complemented by evaluation remarks.

Table 2_Key overall and disaggregated data of SEE Change social enterprises

KEY DATA ON SEE CHANGE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES	EVALUATION REMARKS
<p>Overall overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 700 applications received • N° of SEs receiving financial support = 60¹¹ • N° of SEs receiving business development support = 58 • N° of SEs receiving specialised technical support = 27 • N° of SEs receiving top-up funding = 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The considerable number of received applications confirm a successful outreach of the SEE Change call for subgrants, which also included direct contacts (for previously EU-funded SEs), social media campaign, outreach during local events, among others. • The rigorous selection process, narrowing down over 700 applications to 60 selected SEs, thorough field visits to assess and

¹⁰ <https://www.seenplatform.com/>.

¹¹ 2 beneficiary SEs soon dropped from the SEE Change project as they stopped entrepreneurial operations due to external challenges. The financial support provided by SEE Change ranged between 6000 USD and 25.000 USD.

<i>(Source: Project documents)</i>		validate the information provided in their project proposals before submission to the committee for final scoring. Despite remarked as being time and effort-intensive for the project staff, these field visits were deemed crucial in ensuring the high commitment and success rate of the selected SEs . Indeed, notable low drop-off rates (2 SEs only) indicate sustained interest and commitment throughout the project. (→ Effectiveness).
<p>Gender of selected SEs' main owners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women-led SEs = 29 (50%) • Men-led SEs = 29 (50%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents - QIN 11_01.08.23)</i></p> <p>Gender of the SEs' workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women workers = 221 (52%) • Male workers = 201 (48%) <p><i>(Source: SEE Change employment and job creation tracking sheet 9.10.23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection process ensured an equitable gender balance among supported SEs. This result was favoured, among others, by the team outreach to local women empowerment-focused organisations to have their backing in encouraging women to apply for the SEE Change call for subgrant. • If we look at the latest data on the gender of the SEs' workforce composition (owners and employees), findings again return an equitable gender balance. 	
<p>PwD within SEs' workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of SEs with at least one owner or employee with disabilities = 14 (24%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents – SEs profiling_ Nov 22-Dec 23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection process included SEs owned or employing PwDs. This result was favoured, among others, by the team outreach to local NGOs working on empowering PwDs to have their backing in encouraging PwDs to apply for the SEE Change call for subgrant. 	
<p>Nationality of selected SEs main owners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanese = 49 (84%) • Syrian = 5 (9%) • Palestinian = 4 (7%) <p>Nationality of the SEs' workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanese = 633 (60%) • Syrian = 174 (16%) • Other Nationality = 249 (24%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents – SEs profiling_ Nov 22-Dec 23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large majority of beneficiary SEs are Lebanese-owned. A larger share of refugee-led SEs would have been desirable in pursuance of the project overall objective. Nevertheless, the dire regulatory challenges that refugee-entrepreneurs face in Lebanon is noted. Nevertheless, if we look at available data on the nationality of the SEs' workforce composition (owners and employees), findings return a more consistent engagement of non-Lebanese workers. 	
<p>Selected SEs' geographical distribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEs in Bekaa (North, Central and West) = 22 (38%) • SEs in North Lebanon (Akkar, Tripoli, Batroun) = 16 (28%) • SEs in Mount Lebanon & Chouf = 13 (22%) • SEs in Beirut = 4 (7%) • SEs in South Lebanon (Saida, Jezzine, Nabatieh) = 3 (5%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents - QIN 11_01.08.23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings confirm a significant geographical coverage of Lebanon 	
<p>Selected SEs' business development stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEs at Ideation stage = 1 • SEs at Start-up stage = 35 (60%) • SEs at Pending stage = 6 (10%) • SEs at Mature stage = 16 (28%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents – SEs profiling_ Nov 22-Dec 23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings confirm a predominance of SEs in a start-up business development stage 	
<p>Selected SEs' legal status (registration):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of registered SEs = 38 (66%) • Number of not-registered SEs = 20 (34%). Of these: all Syrian SEs (5), half of Palestinian SEs (2), 28% of the Lebanese SEs. <p><i>(Source: Project documents – SEs profiling_ Nov 22-Dec 23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings confirm the inclusion of also non-registered SEs. 	
<p>Selected SEs' top-4 economic sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and Crafts = 12 (20%) • Food and Nutrition = 11 (19%) • Recycling = 9 (15%) • Agriculture = 9 (15%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents. Employment and job creation tracking sheet 9.10.23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings confirm that supported SEs cover a large variety of business sectors, with the 4 top-sectors highlighted on the left. 	

Source: ARCO, based on data collected by SEE Change project

Table 3_ Key overall and disaggregated data of SEE Change engaged community members

KEY DATA ON SEE CHANGE ENGAGED COMMUNITY MEMBERS	EVALUATION REMARKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of users who created an account on the e-learning platform = 1.051 • Number of community members enrolled in the online social entrepreneurship course = 901 • Number of community members having fully completed the online training course on social entrepreneurship = 397 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings remark a significant number of community members completing the training on social entrepreneurship via the e-learning platform (Thinkific) that was publicly available, in both Arabic and English. Albeit originally designed as in-person training, the shift to the online modality due to the Covid-19 pandemic actually increased the project outreach. This result confirms the

<p>(Source: Project documents: SEE Change Community Training Stats 2023.08.15)</p>	<p>relevance of social entrepreneurship for the local communities across Lebanon.</p>
<p>Gender of enrolled community members (N= 883):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female = 498 (56%) Male = 385 (44%) <p>(Source: Project documents: SEE Change Community Training Stats 2023.08.15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings confirm an equitable gender balance among trained community members
<p>Nationality of enrolled community members (N= 882):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lebanese = 725 (82,2%) Syrian = 112 (12,7%) Palestinian = 27 (3,1%) Other = 18 (2%) <p>(Source: Project documents: SEE Change Community Training Stats 2023.08.15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings confirm a large predominance of Lebanese community members who enrolled in the social entrepreneurship course. A larger outreach to non-Lebanese would have been desirable in pursuance of the project overall objective.
<p>Location of enrolled community members (N= 616):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Lebanon Governorate = 174 (28%) Bekaa Governorate = 134 (22%) Mount Lebanon Governorate = 105 (17%) Beirut Governorate= 71 (12%) Akkar Governorate = 67 (11%) Baalbek-Hermel Governorate = 35 (6%) South Lebanon Governorate = 26 (4%) Nabatieh Governorate = 4 (1%) <p>(Source: Project documents: SEE Change Community Training Stats 2023.08.15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings confirm a significant geographical coverage of Lebanon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of community members supporting the field research = 16 (9 men and 7 women) <p>(Source: Project documents. Interim Narrative Report Year 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 trained community members supported the field research which mapped out the community resources including the social capital, social assets, and gender mobility in the project 5 implementation areas (Bekaa, Jezzine, Mount Lebanon, Nabatieh, North Lebanon) to inform the elaboration of the Accountability Framework. Originally, around 30 community members were said to be originally engaged by the project, then the number scaled down to 16, pointing out to some room for improvement as per the project capacity to retain community members' commitment and engagement throughout the project (→ Effectiveness).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Community Monitoring Unit members = 6 (5 women and 1 men) <p>(Source: project documents_ SEE Change QIN 11_01.08.2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 6 persons out of the 16 community members applied to form the Monitoring Unit. Perhaps more effective engagement/incentive strategies (i.e., a greater amount of allocated budget for monitoring unit members) could have incentivised more participants (→ Efficiency).

Source: ARCO, based on data collected by SEE Change project

Table 4_ Key overall and disaggregated data of SEE Change SJIP social initiatives

KEY DATA ON SEE CHANGE SJIP SOCIAL INITIATIVES	EVALUATION REMARKS
<p>Overall overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N° of the SJIP social initiatives receiving financial and technical support= 21¹² <p>(Source: Project documents_ SEE Change QIN 11_01.08.2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N° of total beneficiaries = 1.234 <p>(Source: Project documents_SEE Change Beneficiaries and Analysis)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 21 new initiatives were selected for the SJIP. One additional initiative was identified and supported, surpassing the initially envisioned 20, as it was remarked the quality of the received applications and available budget that could be allocated. The selected 21 initiatives are engaging a significant number of overall beneficiaries.
<p>Geographical distribution of supported social initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mount Lebanon Governorate = 5 (24%) Beirut Governorate = 3 (14%) Baalbek-Hermel Governorate= 3 (14%) North Lebanon Governorate = 2 (10%) Keserwan – Jbail Governorate = 2 (10%) South Lebanon Governorate = 1 (5%) Nabatieh Governorate = 1 (5%) 4 (19%) are working across all Lebanon <p>(Source: Project documents. Interim Narrative Report Year 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings confirm a significant geographical coverage of Lebanon

¹² The grant amount disbursed to SJIP initiatives ranged between 20.000 USD and 50.000 USD.

<p>Gender of the social initiatives' main applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women = 7 (33%) • Men = 14 (67%) <p>Gender of the social initiatives overall beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women = 751 (61%) • Men = 483 (39%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents_SEE Change Beneficiaries and Analysis)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While lead applicants are largely male, findings confirm that the social initiatives indeed are engaging a significant number of women.
<p>Nationality of the social initiatives' main applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanese = 20 (95%) • Palestinian Lebanese = 1 (5%) <p>Nationality of the social initiatives overall beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanese = 983 (80%) • Palestinian = 23 (2%) • Syrian = 67 (5%) • Other = 161 (13%) <p><i>(Source: Project documents_SEE Change Beneficiaries and Analysis)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social initiatives' lead applicants are almost all Lebanese; however, the overall beneficiaries include a share of non-Lebanese.

Source: ARCO, based on data collected by SEE Change project

Table 5_ Key overall and disaggregated data of SEE Change SESOs

KEY DATA ON SEE CHANGE SESOs	EVALUATION REMARKS
<p>Overall overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N° of SESOs attending the capacity building programme = 41 • N° of SESO representatives involved in the capacity building programme = 216 <p><i>(Source: Project documents_ SESOs Mapping & Participation)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 100 SESOs mapped and contacted for the need assessment were invited to stake part to the capacity building programme and ultimately 41 signed up, positively exceeding the project participation target (40). The rest did not apply perhaps due to limited staff availability or shift towards different markets, according to interviewed project staff. Additionally, data also points out to the absence of financial support as a possible factor perhaps discouraging other SESOs to sign up (see Table 1_ Key examples of SEE Change need-tailored and participatory approach). More, despite reported initial challenges in attracting SESOs' representatives participation in the capacity building sessions, the project staff was later able to improve their mobilisation strategies and ultimately bypassed by far the participation target (216 participants against 120 target). Still, given the initially encountered challenges, interviewed project staff agreed that there is room for improvement as per a more successful mobilisation of SESOs (→ Recommendations).
<p>Geographical distribution of supported SESOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beirut Governorate = 30 (73%) • Mount Lebanon Governorate = 5 (12%) • North Lebanon Governorate = 3 (7%) • Baalbek-Hermel Governorate = 1 (2%) • Bekaa Governorate = 1 (2%) <p><i>(Source: Elaboration of project documents_ SESOs Mapping & Participation)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings point out an unexpected diversity in regard to SESOs' geographical location across Lebanon, albeit Beirut-located SESOs still represent by far the large majority.

Source: ARCO, based on data collected by SEE Change project

Table 6_ Key overall and disaggregated data on the EDPU outreach

KEY DATA ON EDPU OUTREACH	EVALUATION REMARKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 431 unique decision-making representatives (donors, government) and sector experts engaged • 264 women and 167 men • 283 Lebanese and 148 non-nationals • 78 representatives from NGOs, 197 representatives from INGOs, 86 representatives from the donor community and multilateral organisations (such as the UNDP, ILO, EU, KfW...), 11 from government institutions (MoSA, MoEHE, MoL), 52 from academic/think tank institutions/evaluation consultancies, 3 from Social Enterprises (SEs), and 4 from other types of organizations. <p><i>(Source: EDPU updated data_ 14.12.23)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To account for its target groups, the EDPU kept track of all consultation requests received and addressed, and more generally, of the number of Lebanese decision makers and representatives of the donor community and experts who reported to or consulted the EDPU as a reference for up-to-date policy analysis.

Source: ARCO, based on data collected by SEE Change-EDPU unit

3.2 Coherence

How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution

Significant alignment with international and national priorities & strategies

Evaluation findings confirm that the **project design and implementation are aligned with the priorities of the Lebanese context**, demonstrating **consistency with frameworks guiding the country's reconstruction process**. Also, the project emphasis on the role of the SSE in fostering local development and social stability is **aligned with European and relevant international views and priorities**. Furthermore, the role of **EDPU** and the **SEE Change advocacy** component (particularly the work currently carried out by the SSE Task Force on the advocacy and action plan (EAAP) for the Lebanese Social Economy Ecosystem and the Social Economy national draft law) were designed and implemented to **adhere to both national and international frameworks** (→ Effectiveness & Sustainability).

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES	
<i>Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)</i>	SEE Change project was designed and implemented in line with priorities outlined in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) ¹³ . Particularly, its overall objective is directly linked with the strategic objective 4 of reinforcing Lebanon's economic, social, and environmental stability. The project was well aligned with the impacts that LCRP aimed to reach such as the mitigation of the deterioration in the economic condition of vulnerable populations (impact 4) and the strengthening of social stability in Lebanon (impact 5). Indeed, SEE Change project was strongly connected to the Livelihood Sector and the Social Stability Sector. In particular, the project activities implemented at the micro and meso levels were aimed at stimulating local economic growth (in alignment with outcome 1 of Livelihood Sector) and involving community members (in alignment with outcome 2 of Social Stability Sector), while at macro level the project commitment to advocate for the promotion of the SSE is aimed at strengthening and enhancing the institutional and governance level (coherently with outcome 1 of Social Stability Sector)
<i>Lebanon Reform Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF)</i>	Lebanon Reform Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) ¹⁴ elaborated in the aftermath of the Beirut port explosion represents a collaborative and strategic partnership involving the Government, civil society, and international community. SEE Change project well adheres to the 4 Pillars of the framework: the improvement of the governance and accountability, the restoration of economic opportunities and livelihoods, the improvement of services and infrastructure and, especially, the fostering of social protection and social inclusion.
ALIGNMENT WITH EUROPEAN APPROACH	
<i>EU Action Plan for the Social Economy and Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions</i>	SEE Change project operated within the contextual framework marked by the approval of the EU Action Plan for the Social Economy ¹⁵ (2021) and the issuance of the Council Recommendation ¹⁶ on developing social economy framework conditions (2023). Within this context, the project aimed at fostering the SSE in Lebanon as a tool to improve social stability and local development is well aligned with EU approach which underlines the pivotal role of this sector and encourages national government to enable ecosystems in which it can thrive.
<i>EU-Lebanon MIP Programme</i>	More, SEE Change is also aligned with the Multi-Annual Indicative Program of cooperation between EU and Lebanon ¹⁷ (2021-2027). The program delineates as key priorities of this cooperation: the enhancement of a good governance and the support of reforms, the strengthening of an inclusive and resilient economy and the promotion of a green and sustainable recovery.
ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS	
<i>UN Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSSE)</i>	The United Nation Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy , spearheaded by the ILO, published a position paper ¹⁸ in 2022 highlighting the contribution of SSE to the achievement of SDGs , which underlines the role of the SSE in achieving all 17 SDGs. The variety of social objectives covered by SSE actors and their impacts on territories and sectors can lead to systemic change under the reaching of SDGs. Furthermore, SSE plays a significant role in generating employment, delivering social services, and fostering social cohesion and resilience at the community level. The study also recognises the SSE important role in dealing with multifaceted contemporary crises. All these aspects are recalled in the structure of SEE Change project and its objectives of promoting local development and social stability. SSE promotion in Lebanon is in line with this perspective, recognising that the strengthening of the SSE ecosystem can create a solid framework for the development of SSE actors.
<i>UNGA Resolution on SSE</i>	The United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution " Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development " ¹⁹ in 2023 recognising the role of the SSE in eradicating poverty and promoting democracy and social justice. The resolution encourages Member States to elaborate and adopt strategies and policies which foster the development of SSE. SEE Change objectives and construction are strictly in line with this perspective, translating it into an ecosystem approach intervention.

¹³ 2023, *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)* produced by Government of Lebanon and United Nations

¹⁴ 2020, *Lebanon Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework*, World Bank Group, United Nations, and European Union

¹⁵ 2021, *EU Action Plan for the Social Economy*, European Commission

¹⁶ 2023, *Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions*, Council of the EU

¹⁷ 2022, *Multi-Annual Indicative Program of cooperation between EU and Lebanon*, EU DG-NEAR

¹⁸ 2022, *Advancing the 2030 Agenda through the Social and Solidarity Economy*, UNTFSSSE

¹⁹ 2023, *Resolution on Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development*, UN General Assembly (A/RES/77/281)

OECD on SSE

In 2022, OECD adopted a **recommendation on Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation**²⁰ with the aim of enhancing the role of the SSE in creating businesses but also providing services and building communities. Moreover, the recommendation emphasizes the pivotal role of SE in context of crisis. This perspective also represents an important contextual element which reinforces the projects and its intervention logic.

Additionally, in 2023 OECD published the report "**The social and solidarity economy as a partner along the refugee journey**"²¹ which underlines the added value of SSE in addressing the challenges of migration. The report emphasised the role of SSE in the social and labour market inclusion of refugees in host societies, this is particularly relevant considering Lebanese context and SEE Change design. More, the report underlines that active participation of refugees in local communities through SSE can contribute to changing perceptions and, consequently, promote social cohesion.

Ensured continuity, alignment and coherence with relevant interventions sharing SEE change objectives

SEE Change project is well aligned with previous interventions in Lebanon focusing on promoting the SSE. More specifically, the project design **capitalised on the results and the lessons learnt of previous initiatives**, notably the EU-funded initiatives of MedUp!²², Badael²³, Al Mashghal²⁴ which were aimed at strengthening the same target groups. As an example, the **ecosystem approach** operationalized in a work on three levels (micro, meso, and macro levels) is a proven structure already experienced with MedUP! project. SEE Change project design is also well aligned with Badael **community-centred approach** concerning the active involvement of the community as an important factor in the promotion and accounting of social stability. More, several **activities** carried out in the framework of SEE Change were **directly linked or in continuation with previous interventions**. For instance, **Badael started a discourse on the definition of the legal framework for SE that was continued with SEE Change**. Indeed, the work on the advocacy component and on the draft Social Economy law were developed based on the groundwork laid by this earlier project, aiming to leverage and build upon the accomplishments already realized.

The project coherence with other interventions is also demonstrated in the **dual-track sub-granting mechanism** for SEs that included a specific funding opportunity for SEs that had previously received **support from other EU projects** (Badael, MedUP! and Fursa projects²⁵). This approach reflects the willingness to create a **coherent intervention with other initiatives implemented in the area**, to ensure **continuity of the support provided**. More, it is coherent with the project original design aiming to experiment more innovative support mechanisms with more advanced social enterprises (albeit challenges hindered this intention → Effectiveness). Project staff also emphasised collaboration and coherence with other initiatives on the ground. For instance, the LINKED²⁶ project, provided some materials on the topic of decent work that were useful in the context of SEs' training; the capacity building for SESOs was created in synergy with other initiatives on the ground, such as the Social Entrepreneurship for Migration and Development (SEMD)²⁷ project. Moreover, the School Enterprise sub-program was developed in coordination with GIZ, which led the VTE4ALL²⁸ program in Lebanon (*Source: Project documents. Interim Narrative Report Year 2*).

Coherent project design reflecting an ambitious multilevel ecosystem approach

SEE Change project activities, outputs, and outcomes were **consistent** with the overall goal of the project and the attainment of the project objectives.

The project **design well reflects the intended ecosystem approach**. Albeit **ambitious**, the latter is indeed **coherent with the complexity of supporting the SSE multi-level and multifaceted ecosystem**, especially in **challenging context** such as the Lebanese case. More, SEE Change ecosystem design created the opportunity to **tackle the different ecosystem levels** and to reach a **high number of beneficiaries and actors** (→ Relevance & Effectiveness).

²⁰ 2022, *Recommendation of the Council on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation*, OECD (OECD/LEGAL/0472)

²¹ 2023, *The social and solidarity economy as a partner along the refugee journey*, OECD

²² Implemented between 2018 and 2022, the EU-funded MedUP! project (EuropeAid/155554/DH/ACT/Multi) aimed at promoting an enabling environment in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) for the development of the social entrepreneurship sector as a driver for inclusive growth and job creation.

²³ Implemented between 2017 and 2020, the EU MADAD-funded BADAEL project -*Building Alternative Development Assets and Entrepreneurial Learning*- aimed at social stability and community resilience through enhancing the communities' understanding of socio-economic opportunities and resilience assets, by strengthening the individuals' skills to identify and engage in innovative sustainable solutions, while promoting social entrepreneurship as a mechanism for civic engagement.

²⁴ Al Mashghal project, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, aimed at strengthening the prospects of youth towards social and economic inclusion in Lebanon.

²⁵ EU MADAD-funded FURSA aimed at improving the social and economic inclusion of youth in refugee and host communities in Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey

²⁶ EU MADAD-funded LINKED- Linking Vulnerable Populations and Inclusive Market Networks to Advance Sustainable Economic Development in Lebanon (2020-2023)

²⁷ Social Entrepreneurship for Migration and Development (SEMD) is a regional project initiated and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to contribute to strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem that enables the initiation, development, and implementation of innovative entrepreneurial solutions to migration and development challenges namely in Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon.

²⁸ EU funded project "Vocational and Technical Education for All in Lebanon" (VTE4all) aimed at enhancing the capacities of individuals with limited access to resources in Lebanon to pursue dignified livelihood pathways through improved access to quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

3.3 Effectiveness

Is the intervention achieving its objectives? The extent to which the intervention achieved its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups

Satisfactory achievement of results, with room for improvement

The analysis of the effectiveness of the intervention included the assessment of the degree of achievement of specific objectives and expected results, measured through indicators, and related targets. These indicators were monitored and assessed by the internal monitoring work carried out by the project staff. The project logical framework (→ Annex 4) returns an **overall satisfying achievement of the project outcome and output indicators**, despite the **dire contextual challenges** within the implementation took place (→ Relevance) and the **ambitious project objectives** pursued at all levels of the Lebanese SSE ecosystem (micro, meso, macro levels).

Overall, SEE Change project managed to reach a **considerable number of beneficiaries, gender-balanced and including a considerable number of target groups of diverse nationality**, as highlighted in the table below.

Table 7_ SEE Change reached target groups

	Lebanese	Palestinians	Syrians	Other nationality
Under A 2.1.1, A 2.1.2, A 2.1.3, A 2.2.1, A 2.3.1, A 2.4.1, 2.4.2, A 2.5.1	5.146	817	2.468	85
Under A 3.1.1, A 3.2.1 & A 3.2.2	506	78	34	6
Total (by nationality)	5.652	895	2.502	91
GRAND TOTAL	9.140			
Women	4.936 (54%)			
Men	4.204(46%)			

Source: SEE Change project data_09.01.24

Evaluating the effectiveness of an intervention, however, includes observing beyond numbers and logical framework indicators, hence this section delves deeper into the performance of the different components of SEE Change, triangulating quantitative and qualitative findings of the final evaluation (see tables below).

Table 8_ Assessment of the project effectiveness in pursuing the achievement of Output 2.1

Op 2.1. Community members are capacitated and supported on SE monitoring activities and tools

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

“ I benefited personally and professionally, (...) because now I understand how I can use these tools in my village. **”**

Community Monitoring Unit member interviewed by ARCO

- Interviewed Monitoring Unit (MU) members expressed **considerable satisfaction and enthusiasm** for their work in SEE Change project, finding it valuable for their **personal and professional growth**. The experience has **positively impacted their skills** (particularly as per detail-oriented work, problem-solving, effective communication, tool utilization, and adaptability). Indeed, they believed to be **capacitated to apply such learnings in their communities in the future** (→Sustainability).
- They were **content with the tools provided** by the project staff to monitor SEs’ progress against set social objectives, tools that they actively adjusted throughout the journey to better suit SEs’ purposes and needs and which they believed to be very useful for SEs and their future work.

- MU members felt **properly trained and equipped for their job** by the project staff and appreciated the detailed explanations accompanying the tools, facilitating their proper use.
- The **project staff** was praised by MU members for being **responsive, supportive, flexible, and proactive problem-solver**, fostering a **positive working relationship**.
- The **relationship and networking created and built between beneficiary SEs and the MU members** was pointed out as a **significant, and potentially sustainable, project outcome** (→Sustainability).
- When asked which key factors made the MU members’ involvement successful in their social entrepreneurship initiative, **98%** of respondent SEs indicated **clear communication and strong leadership**, **96%** highlighted **effective collaboration** and **91%** mentioned their **ownership and buy-in** (Source: findings of the SE survey of RPS MENA Practice-based and Action-Learning research, N=48).
- Some interviewed project staff remarked that a significant achievement of the project was the elaboration of **the Accountability Framework**, believed to be paving the way for the establishment of **mutual accountability within communities**, emphasizing SEs’

commitment to deliver on social promises, with the community having both the right and responsibility to monitor and support SEs' flourishing (→ Sustainability).

CHALLENGES & ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Challenges were noted by the project staff in **retaining consistent community members' commitment and engagement over the project's three-year span**, suggesting **room for improvement in maintaining full effectiveness of the project "community-based approach"**, an approach which was echoed multiple times by project implementors as distinctive feature of the project. Around 30 community members were said to be originally engaged by the project, then the number scaled down to 16 (carrying out the field research in the targeted regions), and, eventually, **only 6 trained community members applied to form the Monitoring Unit**. This might indicate the **need for more effective and incentivizing strategies to keep community members engaged**, including, perhaps, a greater budget allocation to retain participation. Collective reflections and discussions among project staff led to recognise this **perceived limitation in local community's ownership** that perhaps could have been improved by **a more effective participation of the community members in the design and planning of some project activities** (i.e., subgranting design, design of the technical support to SEs, elaboration of monitoring tools) (→ Sustainability).
- While the conception and objectives of the **Accountability Framework** are commendable, concerns remain as per the following key elements detected by the evaluation:
 - Room for improvement as per the methodological clarity and applicability of the Framework and its assessment indicators** (the term "Social impact indicators" is found to be inaccurate in this context as indicators does not seem to assess social impacts).
 - Uncertainty about the ownership, future handover and follow-up of the Accountability Framework application** in the various Lebanese regions to assess the communities' accountability and commitment to support SEs' growth (→ Sustainability). Indeed, interviewed MU members did not showcase a clear understanding of the Framework, nor mentioned to have participated to its elaboration.
- Concerning the **social impact measurement tools**, including the SEs' theory of change and the so-called "Social Roadmaps" elaborated by the project and later adapted and used by the MU members to track SEs' social impact, it is noted that, no comprehensive assessment can be made at this time as **final results of overall data collected is still not made available for the evaluators**. More, a **clear, systematized and comprehensive datasheet including all theories of change of supported SEs** was not made available for the evaluators at the time of writing this report. The final results of this project component will be thoroughly analysed by the evaluators for the Ex-post Evaluation.

Source: ARCO

Table 9_ Assessment of the project effectiveness in pursuing the achievement of Output 2.2

Op. 2.2. Existing SEs are equipped with strengthened skills and financial support

KEY SURVEYS FINDINGS

- The large majority of respondent SEs assessed the **business development support** delivered by the business development service provider as either **"fundamental" (42%) or "Quite useful" (52%) to strengthen the skills** needed to manage their business more effectively and efficiently (Source: ARCO's evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48)
- As per the **financial support**, SEs responding to the survey strongly agreed (71%) or agreed (29%) that **the grant was useful for their enterprise**. More, 27% "strongly agreed" and 58% "agreed" that **the grant amount was adequate** to meet the needs for which they requested it. In addition, when asked if internal limitations within the SEs affected the effectiveness of the received grant, 46% of SEs "disagreed" and 15% "strongly disagreed", confirming they were **adequately capacitated in effectively managing the grant**. Still (and not surprisingly given the context) the survey detected **multiple requests for an increase in the grant amount** (Source: ARCO's evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48) (→ Sustainability).
- Respondent SEs are almost unanimously largely satisfied with the overall quality of the project implementation**, specifically regarding the **timing of the support received** (46% "very satisfied", 48% "satisfied"), the **responsiveness and support by the project staff** (71% "very satisfied", 29% "satisfied"), and the **reporting and administrative procedures** required by the project (50% "very satisfied", 46% "satisfied") (Source: ARCO's evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48)
- Regarding the elements of the project support that facilitated the expansion of their operations, market reach, or customer

FURTHER EVALUATION FINDINGS & REMARKS

- The project staff and business development service provider have conveyed a strong belief in the **increased capacities of supported SEs**. Notably, **they remarked that the SEs that benefitted from the coaching are now better prepared and more sustainable**, having effectively tackled crucial aspects such as accounting, marketing, and partnership establishment. Out of the 58 SEs that received coaching, over 80% scored more than 30 out of 60 in the final assessment for business development support, with 24% scoring above 40²⁹, an overall positive finding (→ Sustainability).
- Interviewed project staff (including the capacity building service provider) expressed **great satisfaction with the success in supporting SEs**, acknowledging achieved **remarkable results despite the challenging contextual conditions**. The team's ability to overcome challenges was praised, highlighting **adaptability and problem-solving skills**.
- Active engagement and buy-in from SEs and their interactions with various stakeholders** are believed to be crucial success factors for supported SEs, according to interviewed project staff. Indeed, **notable low drop-off rates** (only 2 SEs) indicate **sustained interest and commitment** from SEs throughout the project (→ Relevance).
- Notably, **the project contributed to create 441 jobs** (including full-time, part-time, seasonal, consultancy-based). 56% of the new workers are Lebanese, 32% Syrian and 12% Palestinian, while 53% are women and 47% are men, a **remarkable outcome for the project exceeding by far its recruitment target value** (40) (Source: SEE Change MEAL framework_updated end of project)
- MU members collectively agreed that the project greatly **supported SEs in learning how to independently monitor their**

²⁹ In year 3, the project staff carried out an assessment to identify the most suited SEs to receive additional top-up funding. The overall scoring triangulated the assessment carried out by the MU members, the project staff and the SESO capacity building service provider. The latter submitted a closing session report for each SE, scoring them over 60, based on the following criteria: Governance; Strategy; Employees; Partners; Marketing and sales; Production and delivery (Source: project documents_Scoring of TopUps North and Beqaa & TopUp subgranting guideline).

base, all respondent SEs cited **access to financing**. Additionally, **85%** highlighted the importance of **training and capacity building**, **77%** emphasized **technical assistance**, **67%** valued **mentorship and coaching**, and **65%** recognized the significance of **networking opportunities** (Source: results of SE survey, RPS MENA Practice-based and action-learning research).

- When asked how **the project supported the SEs' enhancement of their financial performance**, all respondent SEs mentioned "**diversified revenue streams**". Furthermore, **96%** achieved this result through **enhanced financial planning and management**, **94%** through **improved marketing and branding**, and **84%** through the **adoption of new technologies** (Source: results of SE survey, RPS MENA Practice-based and action-learning research)

“ I am a technical person, so I used to care about only technical issues. I cared about hard skills more than I cared about soft skills. I was only thinking about cleaning forests, and I love what I do. But what I learned from this program is that soft skills in the business are more important than hard skills. This is really a life changing learning because now I started thinking business wise, because to keep going I have to make more profits and have strategic thinking. ”

SE interviewed by ARCO

advancements in terms of progress against their social impact objectives, enabling them to make well-informed decisions. Indeed, the Ex-post evaluation will investigate deeper into the beneficiary SEs' social impact.

- It was remarked by interviewed project staff that the organised events, notably the **SEE Change Networking Event** (September 2022) and the **SE Summit** (November 2023) **were remarkable visibility and strategic opportunities for the SEs to meet the ecosystem players**, establish **connections** and explore **business collaborations**.
- Among the positive outcomes remarked by the project staff, the **legal support provided to 4 Syrian-led SEs to register their companies under Lebanese law** was deemed extremely important, contributing to the sustainability and legality of their operations (→ Sustainability) (Source: project documents_QIN 11_01.08.23)
- Unsurprisingly, **previously EU-funded SEs were said to be more aware and advantaged as per the subgrant process functioning and procedures compared to the newly funded ones**. Analysed data, however, did not reveal significant difference in the performance between previously funded and new SEs (**43%** of the higher committed SEs were previously funded³⁰).
- **Business development tools and approaches were tailored and adapted to accommodate PwDs**, an aspect that was remarked as one of the most successful achievements by the business development support service provider, valuable also for its future work in support of SEs (→ Sustainability).

KEY CHALLENGES

- The greatest challenges hindering the project implementation have undoubtedly been the dire **financial, social and political crisis** Lebanon is facing (→ Relevance). Despite the majority of respondent SEs confirmed the SEE Change grant was useful and adequate, not surprisingly, more than **30%** “strongly agree” and **42%** “agree” that external constraints (such as inflation, social/economic/political instability) have affected the effectiveness of the grant, emphasizing **the vulnerability of SEs to broader contextual challenges** (Source: ARCO's evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48). Interviewed project staff noted that SEs are grappling with financial challenges, technical obstacles, and a lack of staff and resources, challenging their ability to ensure business sustainability (→ Sustainability).
- Among the implementation challenges, interviewed project staff and MU members pointed out that many SEs **faced problems in understanding the requirements for documentation**, such as the necessity for suppliers to be registered and possess a VAT number. Many SEs indeed faced **administrative challenges**, particularly in **documentation**, such as creating templates for contracts and timesheets, necessitating additional assistance.
- Another remarked challenge was mentioned for **SEs led by non-Lebanese individuals**, as the latter face severe **regulatory constraints in Lebanon**, including difficulties in registering their businesses and obtaining residency for their staff.
- Some challenges arose for some SEs in adhering to specific **indicators and timeline** of their social roadmap, leading to the need for **multiple adjustments** with the MU members and **additional time to progress**.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The project designed a **dual track subgrant process** to select beneficiary SEs, one for those previously funded by other EU projects³¹ and another for newly funded SEs, with the **aspiration for the first group to pilot more innovative financing mechanism**. However, the project ended up implementing a conventional subgrant mechanism. One the one hand, this turnout was explained as a more feasible option to face the dire financial challenges on in the country (→ Relevance). On the other, nevertheless, perhaps there was **still room to at least attempt more innovative financial support systems**.
- Another innovative feature of the project design included the **piloting of a MSME-SE clustering activity** (A 2.2.1). Several project staff emphasized the significance of the cluster systemic approach, deeming it crucial for enhancing the competitiveness of numerous small enterprises in the market. However, this component execution was **confined to the project final months** (mid-November to mid-December 2023). Some interviewed project staff voiced that this significant delay was due to the late completion of the preliminary MSME-SE clustering feasibility study in February 2023; still, the activity begun only in November 2023, nearly at project end. Despite this setback, certain project staff still expressed optimism about successful implementation of this component within the project's timeline and its potential continuity. Yet, **an earlier completion of the feasibility study and piloting of the MSME-SE clustering would have been more advantageous and could have allowed for a thorough assessment of its effectiveness at this time**.
- A certain **participation fatigue** was highlighted by many interviewed project staff due to the constant surveys, meetings, and workshops required, impacting some SEs' engagement in the project. Indeed, **SEs were burdened by the significant demand for data collection** from project staff, the MU members, external consultants, and evaluators, **highlighting a sub-optimal coordination in managing the M&E process** (→ Efficiency).

³⁰ In summer 2023, additional top-up funding was disbursed to 21 selected SEs that met specific criteria. The latter encompassed SEs' advancement in scaling up, progress in social impact development, commitment to their proposed project workplan, verified financial needs, and successful assessments. The “commitment” criterion evaluated the willingness and receptiveness of the social enterprise and its team members to acquire new knowledge, skills, and insights (scoring ranging from 1 – no commitment- to 100 points – highest level of commitment).

³¹ Social enterprises in Lebanon that were previously funded by the European Union under Badael, Medup or Forsa projects.

Table 10_ Assessment of the project effectiveness in pursuing the achievement of Output 2.3

Op 2.3. New models of social start-ups have access to tailored incubation programs focusing on social justice	
KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS	
<p>“ The financial support was a great help for us, and the most useful aspect of the SJIP incubation programme was when we went around Lebanon. Looking at other initiatives doing their projects we learned a lot. We gained ideas and knowledge on how to improve our initiatives and services for the migrant community in Lebanon. ”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>SJIP initiative interviewed by ARCO</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some initiatives, like the school enterprise pilot, have been so successful that the Ministry of Education has signed MoUs to scale the model in other technical vocational institute, indeed an unexpected project outcome for the future (→ Sustainability). Hence, despite the challenging political climate, such successful collaborations highlight the programme’s ability to foster partnerships even in the absence of a stable government. In total, the SJIP managed to engage local and national 15 public authorities (Source: project documents. QIN_01.08.23). More, some initiatives have received additional funds from other programs, indicating successful performance and good chances of sustainability (→ Sustainability). Some project staff believed that the SJIP has succeeded in transforming organizations that were initially unfamiliar with social entrepreneurship into active social entrepreneurs. It was highlighted that most of the collaborative models were first of their kind in Lebanon. They also remarked, in some cases, that initiatives initially joining for financial incentives have evolved to understand the broader impact of their work, shifting to a collaborative mindset which fostered a sense of community among the initiatives. Indeed, the Ex-post evaluation will investigate deeper into the social initiatives’ social impact. Interviewed representatives of the social initiatives have confirmed to have greatly learned from each other, being encouraged by the programme to connect, collaborate and reach out to one another for ideas sharing, problem-solving, partnership and support opportunities. Interviewed respondents recognized the value of collaboration and leveraging networks in optimizing resources and knowledge exchange to pursue greater social impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The almost totality of beneficiary social initiative assessed as either “Extremely useful” (45%), “Quite useful” (50%) or “Useful” (5%) the SJIP (Source: ARCO’s online pool to beneficiary social initiatives during collective interviews, N= 20) The almost totality of beneficiary social initiatives were either “Very satisfied” (60%), “Quite satisfied” (35%) with the design, management and delivery of the SJIP (Source: ARCO’s online pool to beneficiary social initiatives during collective interviews, N= 20). Indeed, collective interviews with 20 out of 21 supported social initiatives have returned an unanimously overall positive assessment of the SJIP, including the financial and technical support as well as the monthly “SEE Ups” events, designed to foster knowledge, resource and network exchange between the initiatives³². More, they generally appreciated the coaching sessions they received and the frequent follow up on their progress on the part of the project staff. The latter was generally assessed as much flexible and supportive.
KEY CHALLENGES	ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some social initiatives expressed difficulties with the subgrant reporting mechanism, describing it as overwhelming, as well as with the complexities of financial procedures. Some voiced that such administrative and bureaucratic procedures mined the received support, especially for the grass-route and small-sized organizations. Limited staffing for smaller organisations posed challenges to actively participate in the many project activities. This issue was particularly evident in networking events organized across Lebanon. While the latter were much praised for their effectiveness by some organisations, for others, the small size of their staff hindered attendance. Some social initiatives experienced delays in the transfer of funds, impacting their ability to execute their projects in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some social initiatives suggested the need for more and continuous coaching throughout the reporting process to navigate challenges effectively. Some social initiatives felt that they could have benefited from additional financial aid. For small-sized organization facing challenges in participating to the multiple networking events, it was voiced that having a clearer agenda of the events in advance would have allowed them to better select the activities of most interest to attend. The M&E process also for the SJIP faced criticism for having significantly burdened beneficiaries with too many calls and exchanges for data collection, monitoring, and assessments. Some respondents lamented having multiple actors overlapping M&E activities and called for a more efficient coordination (→Efficiency).

Source: ARCO

³² Under SEE Change, the SJIP has supported 21 social initiatives divided into 4 sub-programs: (i) School enterprise: dedicated to co-production between public VTI (vocational technical institutes) and SMEs; (ii) Community enterprise: targeting multi-actor co-production involving citizens, social enterprises, SMEs, and municipalities for the regeneration of rural and urban areas; (iii) NGOs in transition: for not-for-profit organizations transitioning into a more entrepreneurial model; (iv) Public-Private Partnership program: to support partnerships between social enterprises and public authorities in managing community-based services and underutilized public assets. The SJIP included technical, financial and non-financial support and participation to community/networking events. Additionally, in May 2023, a peer exchange program was organized between the 21 social initiatives and peers from the Mediterranean area to feed the elaboration of one of the policy papers of the Impact for Policies Methodology (I4P), co-producing policy recommendations supporting a collaborative and Social and Solidarity Economy in Lebanon.

Table 11_ Assessment of the project effectiveness in pursuing the achievement of Output 2.4 and 2.5

Op. 2.4. SESOs technical capacity is strengthened to better respond to SE needs Op. 2.5. SESOs collaboration is improved	
KEY SURVEY FINDINGS	FURTHER EVALUATION FINDINGS & REMARKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 (almost 80%) respondent SESOs stated that the support provided by the project provided them a “Significant contribution” to the growth of their organisation in terms of operations, market reach, or customer base (Source: RPS MENA SESOs’ survey, Practice-based research, N=32) • 21 (almost 70%) respondent SESOs believed the project was “Fundamental”, for the remaining “Quite useful”, to improve their networking connections with members of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Lebanon, including other SESOs (Source: RPS MENA SESOs’ survey, Practice-based research, N=32) • More than half of respondent SESOs (18) rated as “Good” the quality of technical resources provided to their organisation to better support social enterprises, while 10 SESOs (31%) “Fair” and 4 SESOs (13%) “Very good” (Source: RPS MENA SESOs’ survey, Practice-based research, N=32) • “Training and capacity building” and “Networking and collaboration opportunities” were the most cited answers by respondent SESOs (respectively, 94% and 81%) when asked which aspects of the capacity building programme were most helpful in expanding their organisation’s operations, market reach or customer base (Source: RPS MENA SESOs’ survey, Practice-based research, N=32). <p>“ Under SEE Change, we gained valuable insights into building our capacity as a social enterprise support organization. Importantly, SEE Change encouraged us to explore access to finance for social enterprises. We identified that existing financial service providers generally catered to larger enterprises, leaving a gap for smaller social enterprises. Our involvement in the program led us to internally discuss the development of a specialized loan product for social enterprises, including policies and procedures. ”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SESO interviewed by ARCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings confirmed that the capacity building activities were well-received, with a diverse representation of SESOs benefiting from workshops. Interviewed project staff believed that their ability to adapt and optimize content based on real-time feedback from SESOs contributed to the success of capacity building. • Findings from interviewed SESO also confirm that the project facilitated increased engagement, learning, and collaboration among SESOs during networking events and sessions. SESOs noted they were able to discuss common challenges, exchange feedback, and explore potential collaborations, positive signs of a favoured more collaborative approach in the SESOs’ networks. • Notably, one interviewed SESO highlighted that the programme prompted internal discussions on the development of a specialized loan product for smaller social enterprises, addressing a gap in existing financial services. • One interviewed SESO selected as the service provider delivering the business development support to SEE Change beneficiary SEs (and who also attended the project capacity building programme) remarked that the project provided a unique opportunity for a woman-led organisation in an Arab region to gain wide recognition, opening doors for partnerships and collaborations with key entities in support of the social entrepreneurship in Lebanon. Additionally, the project prompted the SESO commitment to customize social entrepreneurship coaching to be accessible to PWDs, a significant change in approach that was reported as not previously fully embraced. • The development of the SEEN platform³³ was highlighted by interviewed project staff as a major project achievement, despite the encountered challenges in platform development and supplier issues. The platform is said to be designed with sustainability in mind, aiming to continue beyond the project duration (→ Sustainability). It was recognized as a valuable platform in Lebanon connecting a wide group of actors in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, fostering collaboration and unifying efforts. Nevertheless, it is too soon to assess the full effectiveness of the recently launched platform. • Satisfaction was also showed by project staff as per the elaboration of the recently elaborated Learning toolkits aimed at building the knowledge and capacity of SESOs in Lebanon. The toolkits were built on the learnings and experience of the SESO capacity building programme and are now accessible on the SEEN platform (→ Sustainability).
KEY CHALLENGES	ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewed project staff pointed out an initial challenge in retaining SESO representatives’ participation to the programme. This scenario was eventually improved later on as the project staff resorted to diverse mechanisms to mitigate this challenge by reinforcing their dialogue and communication strategies and continuing with an interactive and need-tailored approach. Hence, participation eventually improved as the capacity building proved to be relevant for targeted SESOs, that, in fact, reported a high level of satisfaction. • The challenge of selecting an effective supplier for the SEEN platform development, with a discrepancy between technical proposals and actual implementation effectiveness, led to delays and hurdles in launching the platform (finally ready in only in the last months of the project). Also, the process of changing the supplier was challenging, as procurement process were reported to have greatly challenged the project implementation (a significant challenge that was echoed transversally through different project components → Efficiency). Consequently, the fast- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the positive outcomes noted before in this table, collective discussion among project staff during the evaluation learning & capitalization FGD returned a general agreement on the project missed opportunity to fully exploit its effectiveness potential at the MESO level. The project design, in fact, reveals an originally more ambitious goal in terms of strengthening the market relationship between SEs and SESOs. Hence the technical support to SEs was originally supposed to be delivered by multiple SESO, whereas only 2 SESO service providers did so during project implementation. While the reported reasons for this turnout where diverse (including a lower-than expected quality of technical proposals received and, again, complex procurement processes perhaps discouraging SESOs’ application) there is perhaps a missed chance of the project to achieve greater outcomes in this respect. The remarkable benefits and outcomes highlighted by the selected service provider delivering the business development support to SEs (noted before in this table) suggests that similar positive outcomes could have been attained by a greater number of SESOs, if they had been engaged. In absence of a greater support to secure SE clients and

³³ <https://www.seenplatform.com/>

paced development of the platform functions with little time for validation and user testing was highlighted as a challenge.

- Lastly, it's worth noting that the Consortium partner responsible for overseeing the meso-level project component encountered a **significant challenge** due to the **donors' denial of the waiver to allow its in-house consultants to carry out the activities**. This resulted in **significant drawbacks**, primarily in terms of **time spent on adjustments and procurement processes** and **budget revisions** (→ Efficiency).

to market their service, it's unsurprising that **75%** of respondent SESOs identified "more funding opportunities" as a key improvement aspect for the capacity-building program (Source: *RPS Mena Practice-based research, SESO survey, N=32*) (→ Recommendations).

- Finally, given the quite **late implementation of the Practice-based research** (under A 2.5.1) compared to the delivery of the capacity building programme, **doubts are raised as per the effectiveness of this research** that was supposed to document, step by step, challenges and learnings, and well as to inform the Learning Toolkits. **The draft research report reveals more of a standard final evaluation activity** rather than the outcomes of an "interactive methodology focusing on qualitative tools (e.g. journey keeping), check-list tracking, self-assessment, and group reflective exercises" (Source: project document), a finding remarking an inefficient **duplication of resources in terms of evaluation activities** (→ Efficiency).

Source: ARCO

Table 12_ Assessment of the project effectiveness in pursuing the achievement of Output 3.1 and 3.2

Op 3.1. Members of the SE ecosystem in Lebanon develop a common advocacy strategy to promote SE in Lebanon

Op 3.2. Members of the SE governance structure have increased knowledge and skills

EVALUATION FINDINGS

The policy advocacy component of SEE Change project was **severely affected by multiple challenges, externally and internally within the Consortium** (see "Key challenges" below). This caused a **significant delay** and pressed the implementation timeline at the very last months of the project lifetime. In fact, the bulk of the activities are rolling out in the project very last months, **hence limiting at this time a comprehensive assessment of their effectiveness**.

The following points summarise **key outcomes up to date** and related evaluation findings:

- Since June 2023, the project has appointed the **Lebanese Enterprise Association** to lead on the **establishment of a National Task Force dedicated to the SSE in Lebanon**. This task force **aims to act as a representative body for the SSE Lebanese sector in the upcoming years**. LSE facilitated a series of grassroots roundtable events across Lebanon, involving representatives of key sectors within the SSE ecosystem (including SEs, local authorities, SESOs) to ensure all entities identifying as part of Lebanon's SSE are given an opportunity to input in the Task Force work. The Task Force now consists of **26 SSE stakeholder representatives**, including SEE Change Consortium, SEs, SESOs, academia, UN agencies, NGOs, among others. The Task Force focuses on two main objectives: i) developing a **joint advocacy and action plan for the SSE Ecosystem (EAAP)** in line with Lebanon Response Plan and the UN resolution on SSE outlining the path forward with specific strategies, objectives, and actions for the SSE in Lebanon, and ii) proposing the structure of a **future SSE Governing Body** that will advance the implementation of a legal and policy agenda for SSE entities in Lebanon. The task force currently consists of two working groups, one for programming and one for regulation and policy. The latter is actively collaborating on **advancing the Social Economy draft law** with a legal consultancy firm and advocacy experts, addressing pressing issues identified during community engagements. **Given some misalignment of views within the Task Force members, 2 draft versions of the law are being finalised**, one addressing the Ministry of Social Affairs and the other the Ministry of Economy and Trade. The members of the Task Force are also attending a **tailored capacity building programme** to empower them with key skills and knowledge to implement the EAAP for Lebanon 2024.
- Interviewed project staff remarked **satisfaction for the bottom-up approach** adopted by the project as per the advocacy component, engaging various stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive advocacy strategy that could represent the diverse voices of Lebanon.
- Interviewed project staff voiced that SEE Change, in the end, served as a **valuable tool for communicating key messages to the donor**, influencing discussions on social entrepreneurship and the broader SSE in Lebanon. The project is believed to have **successfully created a space for dialogue** and become a **reference point for SSE in Lebanon**.
- The **creation of the SSE Task Force** is seen by many interviewees as a **cornerstone for SSE in Lebanon**, providing a structured entity to carry forward the project achievements. The handover of responsibilities to the Task Force is considered by the project staff a **successful exit strategy** for SEE Change, fostering the growth of a more structured SSE ecosystem. While the evaluation sensed **significant positive expectations** among interviewees about the potentialities of the Task Force, the EAAP and the draft Social Economy law, other interviewed external stakeholders, on their side, expressed a more cautious optimism regarding the ambitious draft law, considering historical challenges in law implementation in Lebanon. More, some interviewed external stakeholders expressed frustration about the **non-involvement of representatives of government authorities in the Task Force** (→ Sustainability). Interviewed Task Force representatives did confirm that the general view of engaged stakeholders was that of not having ministry representatives and other local authorities directly at the Task Force table, fearing that their presence could bring conflicting agendas. Nevertheless, project staff remarked that Lebanese government representatives did participate to the SSE Task Force discussions and attended the validation meetings of the EAAP, along with other key actors such as USAID representatives, among others.

KEY CHALLENGES

- A great hindrance in SEE Change advocacy component was due to the **Lebanese governmental instability which prompted the donor to suspend all advocacy initiatives in year 1 of the project** (resumed only in year 2) causing more than 1-year delay of this project component.
- The project advocacy component faced another major hurdle when a change in personnel at the EU delegation led to the **denial of the waiver** for the project partner who was initially responsible for leading this component (a waiver needed for its in-house experts to operate). Hence, the partner had to navigate complex procurement processes to hire external consultants, causing delays in project activities despite having internal expertise.

- Adding complexity, in year 3 of the project, a **significant divergence in vision within the Consortium impeded the consensus on the strategy and priorities for advancing the Social Economy draft law**, leading to a **change in leadership for the project advocacy activities**. On one side, a more pragmatic approach prioritized seizing the momentum for the timely submission of the Social Economy draft law, given the challenging political context and the intricate legal path in the Lebanese parliament. This perspective focused on proposing a technically sound draft law, compliant with the legal system and ready for parliamentary submission. On the other side, the other approach prioritised ensuring ample time for gathering ecosystem consensus and crafting a draft law satisfying diverse perspectives in the Lebanese ecosystem, even if at the cost of postponing the legal course of the law.

Source: ARCO

Table 13_ Assessment of the project effectiveness in pursuing the achievement of Output 1.1 and 1.2

Op. 1.1. EDPU members lead on policy discussions on common socio- economic developments

Op. 1.2. EDPU develops evidence-based data to influence actions

EVALUATION FINDINGS

“ We have acquired a substantial body of high-quality research studies and papers that not only benefit our programmatic activities but also serve as valuable resources for advocacy with donors and other international NGOs. The presence of the EDPU has proven to be highly relevant and successful. It is challenging to quantify how much of this success is attributable to the exceptional quality of the team managing it, but it is safe to say that the EDPU's work has been truly valuable. ”

SESO interviewed by ARCO

- Evaluation findings return a general **consensus concerning the positive feedback on the EDPU's work**, both within the SEE Change Consortium and from interviewed external stakeholders.
- The EDPU³⁴ was tasked with offering **program-specific and broader policy-related recommendations**. A **first co-creation phase** of its mandate involved meetings, elaborating the Steering Committee ToR, the EDPU research content strategy, the communication, visibility, and influencing plans, among others. This phase was remarked as being key to establishing and retaining a solid identity and direction in subsequent years.
- Respondents expressed **satisfaction as per the positive outcomes of the EDPU research**, which have **positively influenced decision making processes and donor policies** such as the Social Protection Strategy framework, the EU Commission implementing decision of 15.12.2021, the National TVET Strategic Framework, the Social Economy draft law, the National Employment Policy (NEP), Lebanon's SME Strategy, Lebanon Emergency Crisis and Covid-19 Response Social Safety Net project (ESSN), Lebanon Reform, Recovery & Reconstruction Framework (3RF), and the National SSE Governance model (Source: evaluation findings and project documents_ SEE Change QIN 11_01.08.23). By December 14, 2023, the EDPU had engaged a total of **431 unique decision-making representatives** (donors, government) and **sector experts** from NGOs, donor community and multilateral organizations (such as the UNDP, ILO, EU), Lebanese government institutions (MoSA, MoEHE, MoL), and from academic/think tank institutions/ evaluation consultancies, social enterprises and other type of organisations. These stakeholders consulted the EDPU through direct work-related inquiries, downloading/commenting on EDPU's papers, participating in unit events, or seeking information about the EDPU in relation to Lebanon's socio-economic developments (Source: evaluation findings and project documents_ SEE Change QIN 11_01.08.23- and EDPU update).
- Also, it was satisfactorily remarked that the EDPU **achieved a high satisfaction rate** (always between 90-100%) in bi-annual participation surveys, demonstrating their adaptability and responsiveness (Source: evaluation findings and project documents_ SEE Change QIN 11_01.08.23).
- Since summer 2023, EDPU was mandated with concentrating **efforts on supporting SEE Change project** with the aim to bolster its legacy through **enhanced policy and advocacy efforts**, particularly around establishing the National Task Force for the SSE in Lebanon. The EDPU **worked to ensure alignment** of the EAAP with new developmental frameworks, the Lebanese Response Plan, the UNSC Convention on SSE, the 3RF, among others. More, the EDPU successfully facilitated the Task Force **connection with high-level interlocutors**, in shaping its overarching concept and providing technical support. The EDPU support was assessed as **remarkably useful** for the SSE Task Force.

KEY CHALLENGES

- **The Lebanese multifaced crisis significantly altered the EDPU initial setup**, so the unit had to redefine its role and objectives in light of the new circumstances. As a result, the EDPU **shifted the focus from exclusive policy analysis to conducting relevant evidence-based research for programmes**, ending up with a dual function of offering program-specific and broader policy-related recommendations.
- Over time, staff turnover in the 5 Consortia leadership led to **frequent negotiations and re-alignments**. Continuous changes made adapting research and policy messages a challenging side-line task for the EDPU.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

- It emerged that, for improved communication effectiveness, the EDPU would have benefitted from hiring an **internal dedicated communication expert** and, for enhanced research management, a dedicated research manager. Also potentially internalizing some research tasks based on internal expertise could have been more effective (→ Efficiency).
- Findings point out a **lack of initiative** from EUTF partners and donor in actively exploring options and solutions **for the EDPU sustainability** after the end of the project (→ Sustainability).

Source: ARCO

³⁴ EDPU was originally established with an independent team to coordinate policy inputs from all EUTF Consortia and was accountable to a Steering Committee composed of EUTF implementing partners and the EU. Essentially, the objective was for the entity to utilize data and evidence from Lebanon to influence programming and make informed funding decisions.

3.4 Efficiency

How well are resources being used? The extent to which the intervention delivered results in an economic and timely way.

Consolidated consortium's expertise and a multifaceted assessment of the project collaboration, communication, governance and management

The implementation of SEE Change project benefitted from a **consolidated, committed, and skilled partnership with significant experience on the ground**.

The **Consortium's overall collaboration** to achieve the project objectives was **generally praised by partners**, even if this often asked for **collective efforts in aligning different ways of working and visions**. In this respect, the meetings of the Project Coordination Board (PCB) were regularly held and were positively recognised as helpful to share information and updates on project activities and progress. Nevertheless, a **relevant misalignment concerning the strategic priorities for the project advocacy component** was experienced and later bypassed with the shift of the advocacy leadership from one partner to another, a disagreement within the Consortium that added complexity to an already consistently delayed and challenged project component (→ Effectiveness). Against this backdrop, it was voiced by project partners that **a stronger strategic guidance throughout project implementation from the Steering Committee would have been beneficial** (→ Recommendations).

In line with this finding, a **challenge** that was remarked by the project staff was **properly channelling messages to the right interlocutor within the donor**—though this was said to have improved towards the project conclusion. The lack of clarity and understanding about the dynamics of the donor's decision-making processes and priorities was said to have posed some difficulties in efficiently allocating resources and steering project goals. It was also noted that the Consortium generally **lacked proper understanding of a clear donor's strategy for Lebanon**. This challenge was certainly aggravated by the **significant donor's personnel turnover** during the project lifetime, an aspect which was echoed from Consortium's respondents as adding on to the difficulties faced by the project. Indeed, given the dire contextual challenges in which the project was implemented, it was remarked that **the Consortium would have benefited from a more consistent guidance and transparent dialogue with the donor** (→ Recommendations).

The **project management over the project lifetime was generally assessed as efficient** from beneficiaries and implementors. Project **beneficiaries** (in particular SEs, community members, SJIP initiatives and SESOs) generally **expressed high satisfaction with how SEE Change project staff managed** the various activities on the ground. More, they generally reported **positive feedback on the responsiveness and support received** and the **proactive availability** of the staff in addressing their needs (→ Relevance & Effectiveness).

As per project implementors, it was noted by some respondents that the **change of project coordination in the final phases of project implementation** (a phase seeing a number of delayed project activities still to be commenced or consistently advanced) inevitably led to some **challenges** in the project **internal coordination and communication**.

Such challenges could also be observed by the evaluators when carrying out the evaluation activities, particularly in regard to the internal and external M&E overall management and coordination (→ Limitations & Challenges).

Also, some project staff respondents believed that the project could have benefitted from the **implementation of a more coordinated overarching communication strategy and plan for the entire Consortium** from the project outset. This was identified as a **missed opportunity for better enhancing SEE Change visibility and positioning in the context**.

More, it was remarked that the efficiency of the project has been challenged by **difficulties faced both by implementors and beneficiaries in complying with excessive bureaucracy of the project rigid rules and procedures** (→ Relevance). This reflected across different project components and target groups, and it was also explicitly voiced by micro-level beneficiaries who reported that the administrative burden required from the project **challenged the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the grants received** (→ Effectiveness).

An overall cost-effective intervention, with room for improvement

Evaluation findings **did not return major challenges in resource allocation and available budget** for each partner and project component. The **budget was reported to be generally adequate and was optimised** during project implementation with two **reallocations** following contextual changes and the approval of **no-cost extensions**.

Some interviewed project staff remarked a **consistent budget underspending in year 3**, mainly due to the challenging contextual circumstances and consequential changes or delays of the project implementation (i.e. shifting to online modalities for some project activities, cancellation of international in-person events due to the burst of Hamas-Israel conflict in October 2023). Nevertheless, at the time of the evaluation data collection, the project staff confirmed that the budget would be fully utilised to conclude the last activities before the end of the project.

A couple of project implementors reported a need for **additional human resources** dedicated to certain specific tasks in the project. For instance, limited staffing occasionally led the **EDPU** to rely on the Consortium's **communication experts**, suggesting the need for a dedicated internal person for better communication management. In addition, it was also emphasised the **need to plan for the full-**

time work of the dedicated MEAL officer for SEE Change project. Findings indeed confirm that this would have benefitted the efficiency of the overall internal M&E system.

Evaluators did identify some **areas of improvement as per the project resource allocation.** For instance, a **greater amount of budget allocated for the work of involved community members, especially the Monitoring Unit,** perhaps **could have enhanced and incentivised a larger and more consistent community engagement** in the project activities. This would have benefitted a more efficient implementation of the project pursued “community-based approach”, and perhaps a greater ownership potential in a perspective of sustainability (→ Relevance & Sustainability).

Furthermore, the evaluation noted that **the internal and external M&E activities,** particularly at the micro level project component, **could have been managed more efficiently to avoid duplication of efforts and costs.** Indeed, the evaluation found **room for improvement** concerning the **overall design and implementation of the internal M&E system.** A **more harmonic and streamlined design and comprehensive planning could have enhanced the efficiency of data collection processes and avoided burden on beneficiaries** (→ Limitations & Challenges, Effectiveness, & Recommendations).

Some **cost-effectiveness concerns also extend to the project activity “Action-Learning Research”³⁵,** which according to the project proposal, was supposed to commence early in project implementation to progressively document challenges and learnings for SEs and SJIP Social Initiatives. The research was carried out late in Year 3 by an external consultant and appears to be as **not fully aligned with the project design objective** while emerging as a **potential repetition of the final external evaluation process** (→ Effectiveness). Indeed, the Action-Learning research **data collection perhaps could have been more efficiently managed and optimised with the external final evaluation.**

Multiple delays and positive adaptations, with room for improvement

Despite the critical situation in the country (→ Relevance) that led to **inevitable delays and significant adaptation of the activities,** the Consortium was able to overcome the various challenges and achieve the project goals.

Other elements, however, contributed to creating significant delays in project flow. For instance, one of the project partners was significantly impacted by the donor’s **denial of a waiver** needed for its in-house experts to operate. This unexpected turnout at the project outset, **coupled with consequential complex procurement processes,** required **significant time to hire external consultants and realign activities and way of working** (→ Effectiveness).

Another **significant delay was suffered at the macro level:** the advocacy component was greatly slowed down due to the **Lebanese governmental instability** which led the donor to suspend this component for about one year. This component, as previously mentioned, was also affected by **internal misalignments within the Consortium** concerning priorities and vision behind the management of this project component (→ Effectiveness)

Concerning **the micro and meso levels,** indeed other inevitable delays were encountered (i.e., delayed transfer of grants), due to the dire context. However, two aspects are considered worth mentioning in a learning perspective. First, the **very late implementation of the MSME-SE clustering activity** (postponed to the final months of the project) may have **limited the potential achievement of more effective results** given the experimental feature of this pilot component (→ Effectiveness). Secondly, the **delayed implementation of the Action-learning research as well as of the Practice Based research (A.2.5.1)** seem to have **somewhat invalidated their purpose as per the original project design,** albeit hopefully still being useful to inform future interventions (→ Effectiveness).

³⁵ The activity is mentioned in the “Additional tools to document learning and improve quality programming” of the project and it was aimed at “document processes, challenges, and learnings from the process that the existing SEs (A2.2.1) and new models for social start-ups (A2.3.1). The findings will be generated in periodic phases, throughout the implementation phase of the project, to allow the team to incorporate the recommendations during implementation”.

3.5 Sustainability

Will the benefits last? The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention are likely to continue.

Promising aspects in various dimensions of the project sustainability, with some exposed areas to be considered for the future

In general, the evolution found positive aspects in various dimensions of the project sustainability, but challenges and areas for improvement, especially in funding and institutional sustainability, need consideration for the future. The table below highlights key considerations as per the financial, technical, institutional/political, social/cultural aspects of SEE Change sustainability.

	ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY
TECHINICAL SUSTAINABILITY	<p>Have Consortium’s capacities to support social entrepreneurship been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewed project staff have confirmed that SEE Change has fostered valuable experience and insights, supporting their future endeavours in promoting the SSE.
	<p>Have beneficiary SESOs’ capacities to support social entrepreneurship been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey findings confirmed that the project positively contributed to SESOs growth, networking capabilities, collaboration, and access to valuable technical resources (→ Effectiveness). It was highlighted that the SEEN platform is a successful achievement and legacy of the SEE Change project. The platform is recognized for connecting actors in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, and for providing an accessible and rich digital repository of SSE knowledge (i.e., papers, trainings, research). Outreach activities, seeking investments, and potential partnerships with support organizations are planned for the platform’s continued development and effectiveness after the project conclusion. Satisfaction was expressed among project staff regarding recently elaborated Learning Toolkits which aim to build the knowledge and capacity of SESOs in Lebanon, incorporating all the learnings from the SEE Change SESO capacity-building program. Accessible on the SEEN platform in Arabic and English, they can serve as valuable resources for organizations even beyond the project conclusion. Some project staff acknowledged potential not fully exploited in consolidating SEs-SESOs networks/relations. The technical support for SEs was not widely provided by many SESOs, a missed opportunity that perhaps could have supported a more sustainable pathway for these organizations (→ Effectiveness & Recommendations). Still, other project staff believed that, while there is recognition that better results could have been achieved, there are now more solid grounds for SESOs, placing them within a larger ecosystem, indicating progress and integration within the social entrepreneurship landscape.
	<p>Have beneficiary SEs capacities been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff and the business development service provider expressed confidence in the sustainability of SEs after SEE Change, noting their skills improvement and the positive outcomes and satisfaction of SEs with the received support. It was remarked that coached SEs are now better equipped and more sustainable, having addressed key issues such accounting, marketing, and seeking partnerships, depicting, overall, a promising outlook for their future (→ Effectiveness). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ <i>As a Syrian refugee, I faced a lot of problems not because of the people but because of the government when it comes to my documents. If Oxfam had not helped me and sent me an attorney, I would not have been able to register my enterprise.</i> ” <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">SE interviewed by ARCO</p> It was highlighted that the project played a crucial role in providing legal support for non-Lebanese entities to register under Lebanese law. This support is deemed extremely important for the sustainability and legality of their operations in the future (→ Effectiveness). It was highlighted that project equipped SEs with practical tools that will continue to be useful for their future activities, such as the social roadmap monitoring tool, tools for their financial projections, marketing, and accounting.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was also noted that the sustainability outlook and success of SEs are not uniform. Some SEs may continue to require ongoing technical support for their sustainability. The project staff emphasized that the key determinants of SEs’ success include the level of passion and belief in the ideas, vision, and social goals of the individuals involved. Still, it was recognised that the future for supported SEs is far from being bright: the dire external circumstances will undoubtedly impose financial hurdles, technical obstacles, and resource constraints, posing dire challenges to their business sustainability.
<p>Have beneficiary social initiatives’ capacities to support social entrepreneurship been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All social initiative respondents expressed a definitive commitment to continuing or expanding their partnerships and activities. The support received by SJIP was said to have greatly supported their initiative sustainability by facilitating, for example, their international market reach, partnerships with other social initiatives as well as with public and private sector entities, increased visibility, support for transitioning to more sustainable business models, obtaining legal registration, launching new products, among others. 	

ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY

Indeed, several initiatives have **attracted additional funds from other programs**, increasing the likelihood of their sustainability.

- It was remarked by the project staff that the SJIP was designed to **foster a sense of community**, and that they were happy to see that **organizations** in different regions **are reaching out to each other for support and collaboration**, a finding confirmed by the initiatives themselves.

Have community members' capacities to support social entrepreneurship been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change?

- Findings confirm that SEE Change was perceived having a **positive impact on MU members' capacities**, fostering their personal and professional growth. Indeed, **MU members felt capacitated to apply these learnings in their communities in the future**.
- Some interviewed **project staff emphasized the usefulness of the Accountability Framework** to foster mutual accountability within communities, emphasizing Social Enterprises' commitment to delivering on social promises and empowering the community to monitor and support the flourishing of SEs. Still, the evaluation highlighted **areas for improvement** including enhancing the understanding and the clarity of the methodological application of the tool, to ensure community members are capacitated for future use. More, **unclear handover regarding the ownership and future use of the tool** for its continued application in the various regions.
- Evaluation findings also highlighted project **challenges in securing a wider community engagement**, emphasizing the **importance of more effective strategies and local ownership for sustained impact** (→ Effectiveness).

Have SSE Task Force members' capacities to support social entrepreneurship been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change?

- The capacity building for SSE members is currently ongoing, hence no comprehensive assessment can be provided at this time.

Have the capacities to support social entrepreneurship at the Lebanese institutional level – locally and/or nationally - been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change?

- The creation of the **SSE Task Force** was voiced by many respondents as a significant achievement and a cornerstone for SSE in Lebanon. The handover of responsibilities to the Task Force is seen as a **successful exit strategy** of the project, fostering the growth of a more structured SSE ecosystem. Indeed, the Task Force is expected to **act as a representative body** and a **key reference point for sector governance** in the upcoming years. Ongoing efforts (headed by the EDPU) focusing on **aligning the Task Force initiatives**, like the **Social Economy draft law** and the **SSE Ecosystem Advocacy and Action Plan (EAAP)**, with **national and international frameworks**, such as the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, the National Employment policy, the National Social Protection Strategic Framework, the Lebanon Reform, Recovery & Reconstruction Framework (3RF) and the recently adopted UN resolution on the SSE, were remarked as **key measures to ensuring sustainability of the Task Force actions**.
- Despite hopes for sustainability, however some concerns were raised about the **Task Force's need for funding after SEE Change project completion**. Some respondents expressed hopes for donors' support to link efforts with existing funding for the Lebanese SSE, ensuring the Task Force's continuity.
- Also, some external stakeholders expressed concerns on the **lack of involvement of government authorities' representatives in the Task Force** and emphasize the need for their inclusion to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness.
- While the Task Force is presented as a cornerstone and exit strategy, the **much-delayed establishment of the Task Force within the project timeframe poses uncertainties about its consolidated ability to guarantee sustainability**. This delay entailed a **missed opportunity for the Task Force to be fully consolidated and operationalized within the project timeframe**.

To what extent has SEE Change improved institutional/political ownership or will to support social entrepreneurship in the targeted areas?

- There are **many expectations as per the future of the Social Economy draft law** that is currently under review by the SSE Task Force. **Many interviewees view the draft law as a significant advancement and foresee that its implementation will contribute to the growth of the social entrepreneurship sector in Lebanon**. The **establishment of the SSE Task Force is seen as a crucial component in overseeing and advancing the proposal of the draft law**. Again, however, **the significant delay of the advocacy component hinders the possibility to currently assess the likelihood of the law advancement**. Some respondents acknowledged that once the Task Force completes the law proposal, the latter will then have to undergo a complex legal and political journey in a highly unstable national context.
- Input from project staff emphasizes **the role of SEE Change as a tool to influence the donor and channel key messages** on social entrepreneurship. The project was said to have played a **crucial role in shaping discussions and highlighting the importance of social entrepreneurship and the broader concept of SSE in fragile contexts**. It was also recognised by project staff that the project was instrumental in **creating a space for dialogue** (within and outside the EDPU) between the implementing organizations and the donor that was essential in conveying key messages about the significance of SEE Change objectives.
- Respondents highlighted **the tangible impact of the EDPU research outcomes on various decision-making processes and donor policies**, spanning social protection, education, entrepreneurship, employment, crisis

INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

	<p>ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY</p>
	<p>response, and national recovery efforts. The research has proven to be a valuable resource in informing and shaping key frameworks and strategies at both national and international levels. Despite the positive outcomes, however findings suggest a lack of initiative from EUTF partners and donor in actively exploring options and solutions for the EDPU sustainability after the project ends, leading to uncertainty about its future. Findings point out a missed opportunity for sustainability, as potential consortia and cooperation opportunities were not explored, nor the scenario of institutionalization by the donor seem like a viable option. Interviewees, nevertheless, expressed hopes for keep building on the EDPU capital and efforts in future interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the prevailing political instability in the country and the challenges encountered in securing public authorities' buy-in and engagement during the project, a notable success story emerges, indicating encouraging prospects for the future. Under the SJIP, the school enterprise pilot surpassed expectations, resulting in the Lebanese Ministry of Education entering into MoUs to expand the model to additional technical vocational institutes.
<p>FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<p><i>Have the financial capacities of supported SE's and SJIP social initiatives been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change, allowing them to keep carrying out their activities to the benefit of their communities?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While a majority of surveyed SEs acknowledged the usefulness and adequacy of the SEE Change grant, it is noteworthy that over 30% "strongly agree" and 42% "agree" that external constraints, such as inflation and social/economic/political instability, have impacted the grant's effectiveness (Source: ARCO's evaluation survey to beneficiary SEs, N= 48). This underscores, inevitably, the susceptibility of SEs to broader contextual challenges. Insights from project staff interviews confirm that SEs in Lebanon are contending with financial hurdles, technical obstacles, and resource limitations, posing challenges to their capacity to ensure business sustainability. The same concerns were voiced also by interviewed social initiatives supported by the SJIP. • Nevertheless, the confirmed usefulness of the project business development support for SEs (→ Effectiveness) and the optimistic assessment of the project staff provide promising signs that SEs are likely to persist in their endeavours to attain financial sustainability in the future. Interestingly, in summer 2023, 32 SEs (55%) beneficiary SEs scored more than 70 out of 100 points, and 12 (21%) scored 90 as per the criteria "Financial Need", meaning "<i>the enterprise capacity to generate and manage financial resources in a way that supports its social mission and ensures its continued operation</i>"³⁶ (Source: elaboration of project documents_Top up subgranting) These findings contribute to a quite promising outlook for the financial sustainability of SEE Change SEs. • The technical support provided to SJIP social initiative was also largely confirmed to be significantly useful for them to continue their activities. Respondents expressed a definitive commitment to continuing or expanding their partnerships and activities. Several interviewed initiatives confirmed to have already attracted additional funds from other programs, serving as an indicator of their successful performance and increasing the likelihood of sustainability. <p><i>Have the financial capacities of supported SESOs been built or strengthened as a result of SEE Change, allowing them to keep supporting the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in their target areas?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large majority of supported SESOs reported that the project support made a significant contribution to the growth of their organizations in terms of operations, market reach, or customer base. More the majority also considered the project to be useful in improving networking connections within the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Lebanon, including other SESOs (→ Effectiveness). These findings reveal positive signs as per the future sustainability of supported SESOs. <p>“ <i>Securing the necessary financing is a key challenge. (...) To introduce a new product for social entrepreneurship financing, we must first secure financing ourselves to lend to social enterprises. This remains a crucial aspect for us.</i> ”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SESO interviewed by ARCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still, survey and interview findings reveal that SESOs are asking for more financial resources to support SEs (→ Recommendations)
<p>SOCIAL/CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<p><i>To what extent have project beneficiaries and engaged key local actors increased their awareness and appropriation of the importance of supporting social entrepreneurship in Lebanon as a result of SEE Change? What is the level of ownership of engaged key local actors/stakeholders regarding the project outcomes?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In summary, the evaluation generally underscores SEE Change positive contribution in fostering awareness of social entrepreneurship and emphasizing the ongoing need for supporting such initiatives. • MU members stated to have enhanced their comprehension of social entrepreneurship, recognizing the challenges faced by SEs and the community's role in providing them with support. Additionally, their commitment to sustaining these efforts in the future was remarked. • Nearly 400 community members completed the online training course, indicating a widespread interest in furthering their understanding of social entrepreneurship.

³⁶ In year 3, the project staff carried out an assessment to identify the most suited SEs to receive additional top-up funding. The overall scoring triangulated the assessment carried out by the MU members, the SESO capacity building service provider and the project staff. The latter included as one of the scoring criteria the "Financial Need", meaning "the enterprise capacity to generate and manage financial resources in a way that supports its social mission and ensures its continued operation".

ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY

- **Interviewed SEs and SJIP initiatives demonstrated a keen awareness of the substantial benefits they bring to their communities**, particularly in the context of a strained and absent public sector and national crises. The findings strongly indicate a **collective commitment to sustaining these positive impacts**.
- The **Consortia** expressed a **dedicated commitment to perpetuating their support for social entrepreneurship**, drawing from the valuable lessons and achievements of the SEE Change project.
- A **Ministry** that actively participated in the project has **formally pledged to scale a successful SJIP social initiative** (as mentioned before), a **positive sign of appropriation on the part of a key governmental actor**, hopefully generating emulative and multiplier dynamics in the future.
- The **enthusiasm surrounding the SSE Taskforce signals encouraging levels of buy-in and ownership from key stakeholders**.
- Finally, predicting the Lebanese Parliament's approval of the draft Social Economy law remains challenging and falls beyond the scope of this evaluation.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

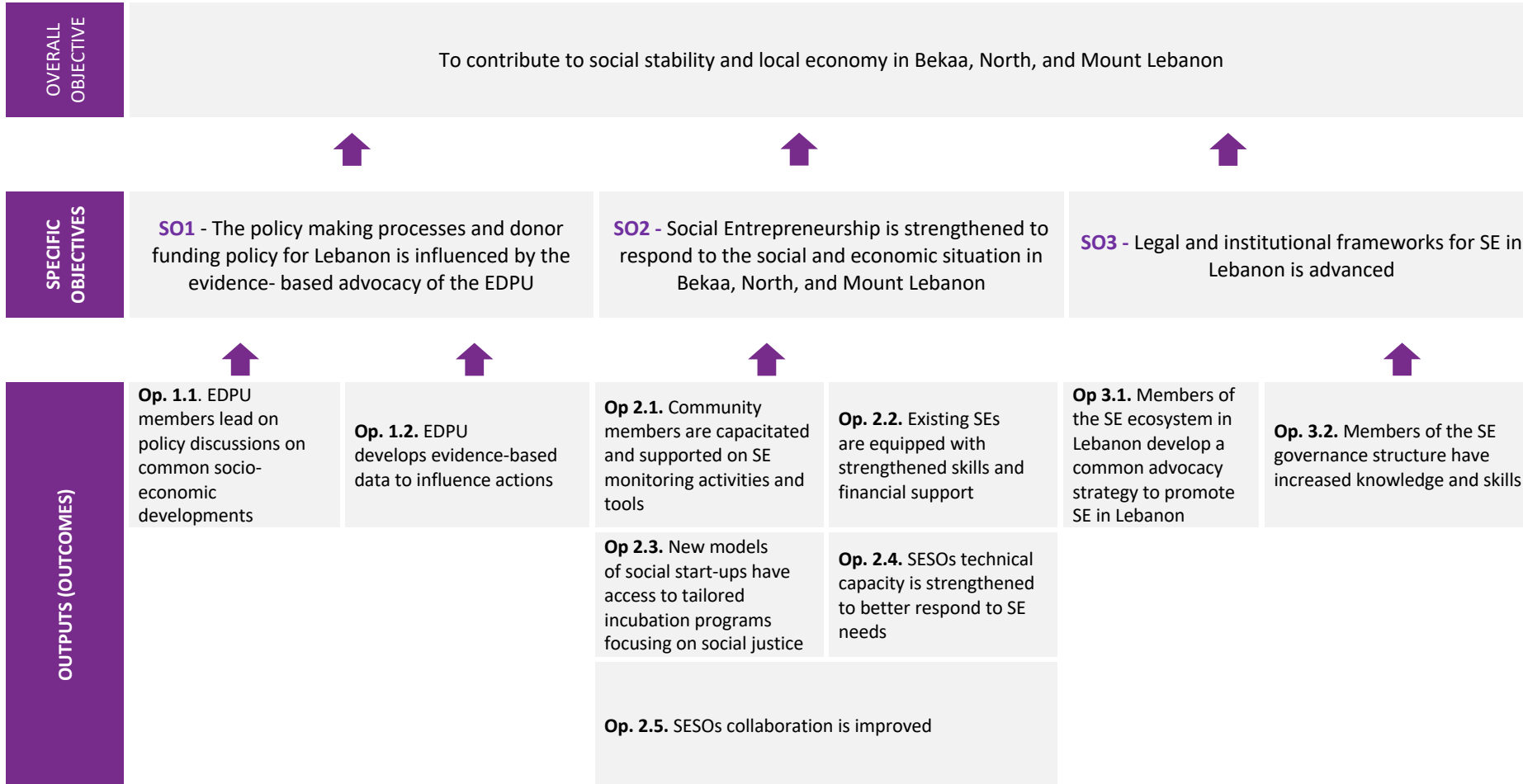
1	ENHANCING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL M&E EFFICIENCY: STREAMLINING DATA COLLECTION, COORDINATION, AND COLLABORATION
FINDINGS & LEARNINGS	<p>As highlighted previously in the report, the evaluation identified a notable fatigue among project beneficiaries at the micro level, attributed to an overabundance of data collection efforts from different teams. Hence, while the project commitment to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) across its multiple components is commendable, the evaluation found a sub-optimal coordination of the internal M&E system within the Consortium calling for more systematic, coherent, and efficient processes. As outlined in Limitations & Challenges (→ Section 2.1), this aspect also challenged the final external evaluation data collection and triangulation, which would have benefitted from a more efficient storage and systematization of up-to-date collected data.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 1	<p>Internal M&E and overall data collection processes stand undoubtedly as a critical component of the project implementation. Data serves as the linchpin, unlocking insightful findings essential for informing decision-making and current and future implementation strategies, acquiring valuable learnings, and revealing nuanced positive or negative project outcomes that might otherwise go unnoticed. However, to ensure its effectiveness, M&E demands rigorous design, coordination, and implementation management. Even when delegated to different monitoring teams, inhouse or external experts, central coordination and oversight are imperative and call for a full-time dedicated MEAL officer. Clarity on the purpose, frequency, methods, and storage of collected data should be established from the project's outset. Additionally, proper M&E training and alignment of all internal monitoring teams should be envisaged early on in the project.</p> <p>In the case of SEE Change, data collection served many, diverse and commendable purposes, including monitoring indicators set out in the logical framework, monitoring social enterprises' progress toward achieving their social goals, drawing findings from the SJIP for the Impact4Policy programme and for the Social Value index³⁷, extrapolating insights and lessons learnt for the practice-based and action-learning research, collecting SESOs, SEs or SJIP social initiatives' feedback on coaching/training/networking sessions, among others. Whatever the multiple final uses and purpose of the data collected, however, it is crucial to recognize that the primary source of information remains constant throughout the project journey, notably the project primary beneficiaries. The latter, often engaged in numerous project activities while managing their own responsibilities (i.e., running their enterprise or social initiative), cannot be repeatedly burdened with multiple surveys. Thus, meticulous coordination of data collection is essential across all project components, even if managed by different partners or monitoring teams.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 2	<p>Furthermore, when engaging external evaluations, project management must ensure seamless integration with internal data collection processes, especially in terms of content, tools, and timing. Since the final evaluation inception report phase, there is a need for a transparent and proactive engagement with the evaluators on the part of the project management, including a timely sharing of project documents. Evaluators need to be well-informed about the project data collection mechanism and management. More, the project management should collaboratively work with the evaluators in identifying where new data needs to be collected and when already collected data can be used for the evaluation. This integration allows for the optimization of existing data and minimizes redundancy in data collection efforts. It is indeed recommended for project implementors to concretely leverage and take advantage of external evaluation processes as valuable learning experiences. This calls for efficient integration, timely updates, transparent communication and sharing of relevant documents, and well-organized data sheets to enhance the evaluation efficiency and insightfulness.</p>
2	OPTIMISING SESOs' INVOLVEMENT THROUGH FINANCIAL SUPPORT & STREAMLINING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
FINDINGS & LEARNINGS	<p>The evaluation underscores two findings needing further consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of more than 100 SESOs mapped and contacted by SEE Change, only 41 signed up for the capacity building, resulting in a smaller-than-expected turnout in terms of number of SESOs involved, hence indicating room for improvement as per a more successful mobilisation of SESOs. • Albeit much satisfied with the overall capacity building contents and delivery, when asked which aspects could have improved, 75% of SESO respondents stated: "more funding opportunities" (Source: RPS MENA_SESOs' survey, N=32). <p>These findings fed a more in-depth collective reflection during the evaluation Learning & Capitalisation FGD with project staff. The discussion returned a general agreement on the project missed opportunity to fully exploit its effectiveness potential at the MESO level. Other evaluations of similar interventions in the region carried out by ARCO validate the ongoing challenge of securing SESOs' active participation and sustained engagement in project activities. This may indicate some unmet SESOs' priorities or needs or an overwhelmed ecosystem with numerous similar support programs, among others. Evaluation findings,</p>

³⁷ The Added Value Index, derived from AICCON, evaluates SEs' impact across 7 dimensions. In the process of being applied to SEE Change SJIP it focuses on economic sustainability, governance inclusivity, and community relations of the engaged social initiatives. Findings are expected by February 2024.

2	OPTIMISING SESOs' INVOLVEMENT THROUGH FINANCIAL SUPPORT & STREAMLINING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
	including from SEE Change, return that SESOs constantly keep asking for financial support in order for them to better assist their SEs . However, project preferences typically lean toward directing funding to SEs and limiting to capacity building and networking activities for SESOs (albeit generally validated as useful).
RECOMMENDATION 1	Envisaging financial support to SESOs could be taken into consideration in future interventions, particularly for SESOs providing access to finance to SEs. Evaluation findings report that for these SESOs securing financial support is particularly crucial in Lebanon's challenging context. Project strategies could involve grant-based loan or a revolving loan capital fund or any other mix involving grants, loans, equity and technical support , for example, and incorporating stringent conditions and incentive mechanisms for effective support. Such strategies, however, need to be carefully designed to avoid creating potential distorting effects in the Lebanese banking system and, whenever possible, be built in partnership with local financial institutions.
RECOMMENDATION 2	Furthermore, actively supporting SESOs to connect with SEs and to secure them as business clients, can yield significant benefits. Although SEE Change design initially envisioned this mechanism—anticipating that technical support to SEs would be provided by multiple SESOs—only two did so during implementation. The main reasons identified for this limited engagement were the perceived suboptimal quality of technical proposals and the complex procurement processes, potentially discouraging SESOs to apply. Given this context, it is advisable for future project designs to proactively consider and address the challenges posed by procurement policies. The recommendation is to provide active support in overcoming administrative and regulatory hurdles and offer comprehensive training for SESOs to adeptly navigate these complexities. Once these administrative obstacles are mitigated through effective project design and implementation, various incentive mechanisms can be employed to actively assist SESOs in securing SE clients and marketing their services. This could include a subsidized voucher system for SEs to access SESOs' supporting programs , incorporating well-defined conditions and incentive structures, among others. In the case of SEE Change, while the project design articulated these objectives and visions, the implementation phase encountered delivery obstacles and administrative challenges. Therefore, the recommendation is to refine future interventions' designs and strategies to ensure a smoother implementation process and better alignment with the project's overarching goals.
3	PROACTIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND STRATEGIC BUDGETING
FINDINGS & LEARNINGS	Over the project three-year duration, there was a noted opportunity for improvement in retaining community members' engagement and participation. Initially involving around 30 community members, the engagement scaled down to 16 during field research and further reduced to only 6 members forming the Monitoring Unit (→ Relevance & Effectiveness).
RECOMMENDATION	To effectively adopt a "community-based approach" , it is crucial to formulate a comprehensive and inclusive plan that actively involves all stakeholders throughout various project stages. This includes, for instance, engaging community members in needs assessments, collaborating on the planning of technical training sessions, and, if possible, co-designing subgranting strategies or other access to finance mechanism. The key focus of this recommendation is to harness the diverse knowledge within the community ecosystem, fostering initiatives that genuinely empower the community to play a leading role in advancing social entrepreneurship. To achieve this, it is essential to establish mechanisms for ongoing collaboration and communication among stakeholders, for example organizing interactive workshops or virtual forums where community members actively participate in shaping project activities or integrate mobile data collection tools and a community dashboard for real-time monitoring (this not only empowers the community but also provides project implementors with timely insights for adaptive management). Moreover, achieving greater engagement necessitates careful consideration of the budget. Allocating proper resources specifically to sustain community members' contributions to project activities and aligning the budget with the pursuit of project objectives is vital. This financial commitment ensures that the community's involvement is not only valued but also supported in a sustainable manner. Hence the recommendation advocates for a proactive approach to community involvement , emphasizing inclusivity, collaboration, and strategic budgeting.

4	PIVOTING TOWARD MORE ADVANCED INTERVENTIONS AND AMBITIOUS GOALS
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Recognizing the progressive maturation of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Lebanon, some project staff voiced the need for future intervention programs to pivot towards more advanced initiatives and ambitious goals. The current landscape was believed to suggest a readiness among participants for more sophisticated programs, indicating a desire to move beyond grants and basic capacity-building efforts. It was voiced that stakeholders are eager to scale and progress to the next level of the social entrepreneurship development. This call for future projects strategic shift is believed to align with evolving expectations from SSE actors, fostering sustained growth and improvement in Lebanon's social entrepreneurship landscape. Operationalising this ambition in future interventions may include envisaging more-specialised training programs and mentorship initiatives tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by more mature social enterprises in Lebanon. Focusing on more advanced business development stages may open opportunities to funding mechanisms that go beyond traditional grants to support the scaling ambitions of successful social enterprises. Also, it is key to facilitate strategic partnerships and connections between social enterprises and industry experts, potential collaborators, government agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organisations, businesses, and investors, fostering a dynamic ecosystem of cross-sector collaborations encouraging knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and market access.</p>
5	STRENGTHENING DIALOGUE BETWEEN DONORS AND CONSORTIA
RECOMMENDATION	<p>In navigating the intricacies of projects, especially within challenging environments such as Lebanon, it is highly encouraged for both Donors and project Consortia to prioritize a heightened level of consistent, transparent, and effective dialogue throughout the project implementation phase. This involves instituting regular updates and fostering strategic discussions within frequent Steering Committees. In environments marked by instability and unique challenges, like Lebanon, the call for increased efforts in maintaining ongoing communication takes on added significance. Recognizing the complexities of the landscape, fostering transparent dialogue becomes not just a good practice but a strategic necessity. More, it can build fruitful grounds for better understanding and advocacy for greater project flexibility of rules, procedures and the use of funds. It is crucial to re-evaluate and potentially adjust these procedures to better align with the dynamic needs of beneficiary enterprises and enable a more adaptive response to changing contexts. The significance of heightened efforts in sustaining ongoing communication cannot be overstated and its key for establishing and maintaining alignment and shared understanding between the project's objectives and the donor's priorities. This proactive approach not only enhances the agility to adapt to evolving circumstances but also contributes to optimized resource allocation. Furthermore, it sets the stage for a collaborative decision-making environment where insights from both donors and project consortia are leveraged to overcome obstacles and seize opportunities.</p>
6	CULTIVATING STRONG LEADERSHIP OF THOUGHT AND VISION WITHIN CONSORTIA
RECOMMENDATION	<p>In light of the identified divergence in vision within the Consortium concerning the advocacy component (→ Effectiveness), future interventions should prioritize the promotion and nurturing of strong leadership of thought and vision. To enhance consensus-building and strategy development, Consortia leaders should proactively foster an environment that encourages open dialogue and collaboration. By instilling a shared understanding of the project vision and goals among Consortium members, leaders can mitigate divergences in approach and promote a cohesive strategy. Furthermore, the development of a clear decision-making framework, with defined roles and responsibilities, can contribute to a more streamlined decision-making process, reducing the likelihood of vision misalignment. Regular strategic planning sessions and facilitated discussions on key project priorities should be integrated into the Consortium's operational routine, allowing for continuous alignment on overarching goals and strategies. A concerted effort to cultivate strong leadership of thought and vision within Consortia will not only enhance internal cohesion but will also fortify the Consortium's ability to navigate complexities and challenges, ensuring a more effective and harmonized approach to project goals, even in the face of divergent perspectives.</p>

ANNEX 1 – SEE CHANGE RESULTS CHAIN



Under Output 1.1:

Act 1.1.1. Organize participatory workshops to develop the organizational structure, advocacy strategy and action plan, and ways of working of the EDPU

Under Output 1.2:

Act 1.2.1. Strengthen the evidence generation and knowledge-base of the EDPU through integrated periodic research and policy products

Act 1.2.2. Implement advocacy actions such as round tables, debate sessions, and conferences to influence policies related to Livelihood and Social Stability in Lebanon

Under Output 2.1:

Activity 2.1.1 Provision of tailored capacity development trainings for community members

Activity 2.1.2 Development of a community-led accountability framework for the SEs

Activity 2.1.3 Community monitoring of the economic and social impact of the SEs

Under Output 2.2:

A 2.2.1 Provision of financial and non- financial support to SEs

Under Output 2.3:

Act 2.3.1 Development of social justice incubation program for new models of social start-ups

Under Output 2.4:

Act. 2.4.1. Assessment of the profiles, capacities, and needs of the SESOs

Act 2.4.2. Provision of capacity development support to SESOs

Under Output 2.5:

Act 2.5.1. Strengthening the networking and knowledge exchange between SESOs through online and offline approaches

Under Output 3.1:

Act 3.1.1. Support the existing networks working on SE

Under Output 3.2:

Act 3.2.1: Provide capacity development support to potential members of the SE office/unit

Act 3.2.2. Support the implementation of advocacy actions

ANNEX 2 – EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Scope and Objectives

The evaluation process had the primary objective of assessing the project performance, providing an overview of the main results achieved and effects generated. Ultimately, this process served as an opportunity for learning and capitalisation, enabling deeper insights and providing valuable lessons learned for further initiatives.

The overall evaluation process encompasses two different tasks: the project external Final Evaluation and the project Ex-Post Evaluation.

The Final Evaluation assessed the project relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability according to OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. In particular, the Final Evaluation delved into the following aspects:

1. The quality of the project design, planning, implementation methodology, delivery, management, and monitoring.
2. The degree of the achievement of the project objectives and expected outputs, the analysis of the project accomplishments and the identification of valuable lessons learnt and practical recommendations for improving future initiatives.
3. The identification of external and internal factors affecting the project implementation and the assessment of how the implementing actors have coped.

The Final Evaluation objectives were organised in three streams of analysis, according to the Terms of Reference (TD 23/001/FLR-IT):

- Assessing project performance and its compliance with **OECD-DAC criteria**
 - Identify, assess and document the evidence for the achievement of expected and unexpected results of the project towards the intended outcomes following the results chain in the targeted areas (Objective 1 of the Final Evaluation according to the Evaluation ToR),
 - Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project related to contribution to partnerships, accountability, value for money from the perspectives of different stakeholders, and capacity to generate development processes that continue after the project duration. This can include the appropriateness and relevance of the beneficiary selection (Objective 2 of the Final Evaluation according to the Evaluation ToR),
 - Assess whether the management and governance structure of the project was fully functional to reach the project objectives (Objective 4 of the Final Evaluation according to the Evaluation ToR).
 - Assess the existing strategies for sustaining the project and recommend measures for strengthening the same (Objective 5 of the Final Evaluation according to the Evaluation ToR).
- Conducting a **SWOT analysis**
 - Identify external environment challenges and opportunities that had impacted the project progress (Objective 6 of the Final Evaluation according to the Evaluation ToR).
- Fostering of a Process of **Learning and Capitalisation**
 - Make recommendations of any knowledge product which can be prepared arising from the evaluation findings (Objective 7 of the Final Evaluation according to the Evaluation ToR).
 - Identify key learnings, good practices, areas to be strengthened to create a more solid basis for evidence-based approach to promote social stability and local economic development in Lebanon (Objective 3 of the Final Evaluation according to the Evaluation ToR).

Evaluation approach and methodology

The overall methodology for the Final Evaluation processes included:

- The **triangulation** of literature review, secondary data analysis and desk analysis of the project documents, monitoring reports and all available internal data.
- The combination of **qualitative and quantitative methods** to collect relevant primary data from different sources. The use of the project available data was combined with a qualitative and participatory approach for data collection, aimed at involving key stakeholders in the evaluation process. Data collected was analysed both in an **aggregate** form, as well as **disaggregated** by gender, age, target community and country of origin. Moreover, general attention was paid to disaggregating data according to any other characteristic highlighting relevant aspects.
- The use of **the project Logical Framework indicators** to assess the achievements of specific output and outcomes and the combination of these results with qualitative data collected.
- The **use of OECD-DAC criteria** as a benchmark to assess project results. Therefore, the Final Evaluation investigated the project relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
- The adoption of an **inclusive approach** throughout the evaluation process: a people-centred approach and the participation of relevant stakeholders were ensured at all stages of the evaluation. Moreover, the development and implementation of data collection tools were held with a **gender-sensitive approach** and a focus on **vulnerable groups**.
- The adoption of an approach strongly emphasising the **learning process** of the project evaluation, as a valuable tool and process for growth and improvement. The evaluation enabled the project team to identify success, challenges, and areas for development, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Evaluation Phases

The following table describes the three main phases of the Final Evaluation process.

PHASE 1.1 PREPARATION AND DESK REVIEW
<p>ARCO had preliminary exchanges with Oxfam to collect more information about the context of the project, its implementation, and target groups to further detail and validate the evaluation process, workplan and logistics. ARCO carried out a preliminary desk review of the project documents shared by Oxfam to have an overview of the available data and the missing information to be collected.</p> <p>This process led to the development of an Inception report encompassing the methodology of both Final and Ex-Post Evaluations. A more thorough desk review of project documents was then carried out on the materials shared with ARCO by SEE Change Consortium.</p> <p>On September 25th, 2023, an online inception meeting was held by ARCO to present the Final Evaluation workplan with SEE change project staff, to clarify the extent of engagement of the project staff and to guarantee a Q&A space to provide all needed clarifications to the Consortium.</p>
PHASE 1.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS
<p>All primary data was collected through online data collection tools, designed by ARCO and translated into Arabic with the support of a professional Lebanese interpreter. Due to the outbreak of the Israeli-Hamas war in October 2023 and concerns about potential escalation in the MENA region, the evaluation fieldwork in Lebanon (planned in October 2023) was cancelled by Oxfam Italia in cooperation with Oxfam in Lebanon team, acknowledging that there were no conditions in place to guarantee the security of the evaluators during the fieldwork. Consequently, the evaluators changed the proposed methodology and shifted to an online modality the data collection activities originally planned on the field. All information and data collected were analysed and triangulated with information available in project documents and reports. Limitations encountered during the evaluation process are highlighted in Section 2.1.</p>
PHASE 1.3 CAPITALISATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS
<p>ARCO drew the conclusions of the Evaluation process from the attentive triangulation of the evaluation results, relevant results of the literature review and findings derived from the evaluation of similar projects conducted by ARCO, to enhance cross-fertilization between different experiences. This triangulation of data was intended to enrich the results and strengthen them, as well as to broaden reflections for future projects on the same topics and/or in the same target areas. The conclusions of the Evaluation process were included in the Final Evaluation report, structured according to 5 OECD DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability), including key learning and recommendations. Furthermore, the Final Evaluation Report encompassed 6 case studies, delving into specific experiences and capitalising on key findings.</p> <p>After the delivery the draft evaluation report on December 7th, 2023, ARCO presented the evaluation findings to See Change Consortium during an online meeting on December 12th, 2023. Observations and feedback were acknowledged by the evaluators who then proceeded to consolidate the final version of the Final Evaluation report.</p>

Evaluation Methods & Tools

The following table describes the methods and data collection tools used for the Final Evaluation. ARCO took care of the overall data collection logistics with the support of the project staff in reaching out to targeted project stakeholders and beneficiaries.

EVALUATION TOOLS AND TARGET GROUP	EVALUATION OBJECTIVE
<p>1 on-line short surveys with beneficiary SEs (48 respondents out of 58 targeted)</p> <p><i>Note: the survey was elaborated in English by ARCO and translated into Arabic with the support of a professional interpreter, therefore it was available to respondents in both languages. It was self-administered to SEs using an online platform (Alchemer).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the project performance, with a focus on the activities linked to the project outputs 2.2, according to the OECD – DAC criteria (relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness) Identify key dimensions of social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities
<p>1 on-line short survey with beneficiary SESOs (32 respondents out of 41 targeted)</p> <p><i>Note: to avoid duplicating the project data collection activity and generating an overburden on respondents, the evaluation questions elaborated by ARCO were included in the ongoing data collection activities led by RPS Mena, an external consultant contracted by Oxfam Lebanon to deliver research activities envisioned by the project.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the project performance, with a focus on the activities linked to the project outputs 2.4, according to the OECD – DAC criteria (relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness) Identify key dimensions of social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities Preliminary explore the role of SEs in promoting social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities
<p>16 on-line individual and collective KIIs with project staff and implementors :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 KIIs with SEE Change project Coordinators and Managers from Oxfam Lebanon, Beyond and COSV - 1 KII with Oxfam Economic Justice Programme Lead - 1 KII with Oxfam Meal Officer - 1 KII with Oxfam Financial Manager - 1 KII with representatives of EDPU - 1 KII with representatives of LSE - 1 KII with a representative of TRI - 1 KII with a representative of IDEAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the project performance according to OECD – DAC criteria and the SWOT analysis Identify key dimensions of social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities Preliminary explore the role of SEs in promoting social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities Preliminary investigate the project contribution in sustaining SEs in promoting social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities
<p>5 On-line collective interviews with representatives of the SJIP Social Initiatives (19 participants out of 21)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the project performance, with a focus on the activities linked to the project outputs 2.3, according to the OECD – DAC criteria Identify key dimensions of social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities
<p>1 On-line collective interview with the 6 community members of the Monitoring Unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the project performance, with focus on the activities linked to the project outputs 2.1, according to the OECD – DAC criteria

<p><i>Note: the interview was prepared and conducted in English by ARCO and consecutively translated into Arabic with the support of a professional interpreter</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key dimensions of social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities • Preliminary explore the role of SEs in promoting social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities • Preliminary investigate the project contribution in sustaining SEs in promoting social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities
<p>5 on-line KIIs with key local stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 KII with a representative of UNDP - 1 KII with a representative of EU delegation in Lebanon - 1 KII with a representative of Al Majmoua - 1 KII with representatives of Al Fanar - 1 KII with a representative of the Lebanese Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the project context • Assess the project performance, with focus on the activities linked to the project outputs 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, according to the OECD – DAC criteria • Identify key dimensions of social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas • Preliminary explore the role of SEs in promoting social stability and local economic development in the Lebanese targeted areas and communities
<p>6 in-depth interviews with selected project beneficiaries to develop the case studies.</p> <p><i>3 SEs were involved (Green Track, Ceasar’s Flame and Salem Farm) and 3 representatives from the SJIP Social Initiatives (Tres Marias, National Development Committee and Art & Craft Woodwork)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information to capture evidence of the project achievements and results, as well as challenges and lessons learnt • Collect information to capture evidence of contextual challenges and opportunities • Collect information to capture evidence of the project impacts especially in terms of social stability and community resilience
<p>1 Learning and Capitalization FGD with project staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify room for improvement and lessons learnt • Capitalise on the project learnings

Evaluation Ethics

The Evaluation process was guided by the following principles:

- A **Human rights-based approach**: all the evaluation process and activities were held in alignment with international human rights standards.
- The Principle of **Accessibility**: all relevant stakeholders had equal opportunities to participate in the evaluation process without discrimination.
- **Inclusivity**: the evaluation methodology was sensitive to gender, youth, disability and refugees, and provided disaggregated data accordingly.
- A **Context-based approach**: the evaluation process was built considering the contextual features of the target areas involved.
- The application of an **ethical approach** to all research and data collection activities to ensure the dignity and privacy of all involved individuals and the conduction of an evaluation process that is consistent with the highest ethical and human rights principles and aligned with the values of the project and its stakeholders.

All data collection activities involving beneficiaries and stakeholders were in line with these principles:

- **Beneficence**: the participants’ involvement in the evaluation should be a benefit for them.
- **Non-maleficence**: participation in the evaluation process must not be harmful to the participant.
- **Respect for autonomy**: the autonomy of the participants was safeguarded in all the evaluation process. Participants were never forced (including through psychological coercion) to answer a specific question or to participate in the interview.

Moreover, data collection will be based on:

- **Informed consent**: all participants were informed about the scope of evaluation, procedures, and risks of the research. The participation of any respondent was on a **voluntary** basis and conditioned to their **formal agreement** to share information exclusively for the purposes of the evaluation.
- **Data protection** is guaranteed through the storage of data in a dedicated secure server by ARCO for 1 year, after this period it will be permanently deleted unless it will be demanded by ARCO to store the data for longer. Data gathered via questionnaires was collected **anonymously**, and the respondents’ identities will always be kept **confidential**.

Finally, the evaluators acted in respect of [PIN Ethical Code](#) and Code of Conduct, as well as of Oxfam’s policies. All the information gathered was kept confidential and was not used for other purposes than those stipulated in the ToR.

ANNEX 3 - EVALUATION MATRIX

KEY EVALUATION ITEMS BY DATA COLLECTION TOOLS & RESPONDENTS

This is a non-comprehensive list of assessed items as additional topics arose/may arise during the evaluations. More, each Evaluation Item reported in the Table below was/will be converted into specific questions according to respondents' roles, background and type of involvement in the project. Operational data collection tools was/will be finalized following the in-depth desk review of the overall project documentation.

		DATA COLLECTION TOOLS & RESPONDENTS													Final Evaluation	Ex-Post Evaluation
		Key Informant interviews (individual and/or collective interviews)								Online Survey			FGD	Desk review		
Evaluation Dimension	Assessed Items	Oxfam project Staff	COSV project staff	BRD project staff	EU Delegation in Lebanon	SEs/social start-ups selected as case studies	Community members representatives	Social start-ups representatives	Local stakeholders	SEs	SESOs	Community members	L&C with SEE Change staff	Project documentation and secondary data		
RELEVANCE	Relevance to the contexts														X	
	Relevance for Beneficiaries and local stakeholders														X	X
	Adaptability to changing contexts and circumstances														X	
	Inclusiveness														X	
COHERENCE	Alignment with national priorities and strategies and international policies and treaties														X	
	Internal coherence														X	
	External coherence														X	
EFFECTIVENESS	Achievement of results and outcomes														X	
	Heterogeneity of results									Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed				X	

		DATA COLLECTION TOOLS & RESPONDENTS													Final Evaluation	Ex-Post Evaluation	
Evaluation Dimension	Assessed Items	Key Informant interviews (individual and/or collective interviews)								Online Survey			FGD	Desk review			
		Oxfam project Staff	COSV project staff	BRD project staff	EU Delegation in Lebanon	SES/social start-ups selected as case studies	Community members representatives	Social start-ups representatives	Local stakeholders	SEs	SESOs	Community members	L&C with SEE Change staff	Project documentation and secondary data			
	Factors explaining the achievement/non-achievement of goals															X	
EFFICIENCY	Expertise and collaboration within the Consortium															X	
	Cost-effectiveness															X	
	Timing																
	Governance and coordination															X	
SUSTAINABILITY	Durability of results	Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed			Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed								X	X
	Factors promoting/preventing sustainability & Exit strategies															X	X
	Sustainability (technical, institutional, social/cultural, financial measures/conditions to sustain benefits)									Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed				X	X
IMPACT	Long-term changes for the target groups	Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed			Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed		Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed					Preliminary assessed	X
	Structural and transformative changes	Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed			Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed		Preliminary assessed	Preliminary assessed					Preliminary assessed	X
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats					Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed						Indirectly assessed		X
L&C	Lessons learnt & Recommendations for future interventions					Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed		Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed	Indirectly assessed				X	X

ANNEX 4 – SEE CHANGE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

NOTE: the following table presents SEE Change logframe including final values provided by the project staff on January 2nd, 2024. The evaluators included a column highlighting the percentage of achievements of target values.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Final Value	% Achievement	Sources and means of verification
Overall objective: Impact	OO - To contribute to social stability and local economy in Bekaa, North, and Mount Lebanon	% of key community members in Bekaa, North, and Mount Lebanon who report enhanced social stability as a result of the Action	0%	60%	80%	133%	Action learning research, endline, final evaluation
		% of key community members who report an increase in socio-economic opportunities in Bekaa, North, and Mount Lebanon as a result of the Action	0%	70%	80%	114%	Endline, final evaluation
		% of people reporting 'no tensions' between Lebanese and Syrians	4%	3%	8%	N/A	SoSt WG ARK surveys
		Number of reported tensions in Bekaa, North, and Mount Lebanon	12%	N/A	92%	N/A	UNDP& ARK, Regular Perceptions Survey on Social Tensions report
Specific objective(s):	SO1 - The policy making processes and donor funding policy for Lebanon is influenced by the evidence-based advocacy of the EDPU	1.1 Number of decision-making processes and donor funding policies influenced by the advocacy action by the EDPU	0	10	12	120%	Advocacy tracker, media tracker (tracks the tweets and re-tweets, public statements, official documents)
		1.2 Number of Lebanese decision makers and representatives of the donor community and experts who report or consult the EDPU as a reference for up-to-date policy analysis concerning socio-economic development	0	80	431	539%	Tracking tool (events, meetings, EDPU communications), Annual survey; Labour Monitor Observatory (LMO) platform
	SO2-Social Entrepreneurship is strengthened to respond to the social and economic situation in Bekaa, North, and Mount Lebanon	2.1 % of targeted community members who self-report that their sense of "civic responsibility has improved due to their participation in the community-led accountability initiatives implemented under the Action (disaggregated by gender, age, nationality)	0	80%	89%	111%	Perception surveys; Action research
		2.2 Number of job opportunities promoted by EUTF (EUTF RF #9)	0	40	441	1.103%	Endline, progress reports
		2.3 Number of supported SEs with a measurable social impact	0	65	79	122%	Social impact measurement tool & community-monitoring reports
		2.4 % of SESOs that demonstrate improved capacity to support SEs	0	80%	91%	114%	Survey and action- research

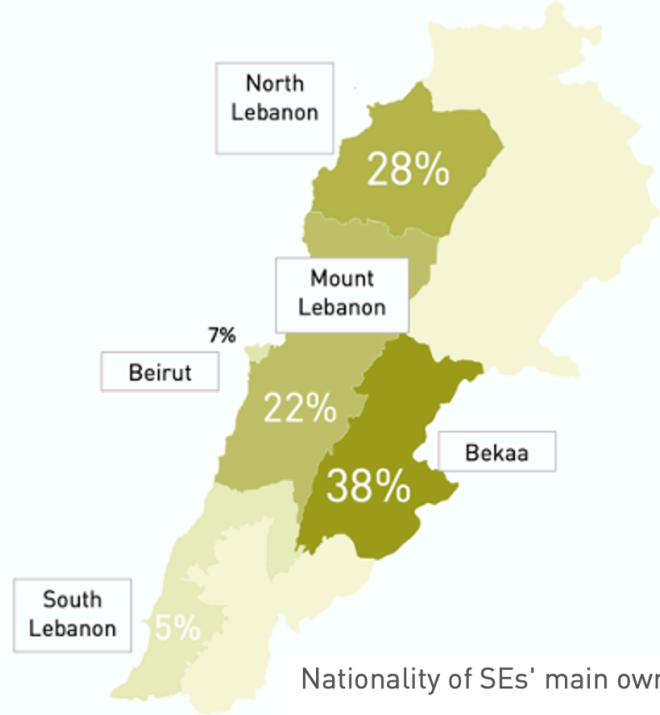
	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Final Value	% Achievement	Sources and means of verification
	SO3 - Legal and institutional frameworks for SE in Lebanon is advanced	3.1 Number of legal documents endorsed by the relevant decision makers to advance SE in Lebanon	0	4	7	175%	Project Records, Meeting Minutes, Attendance Sheets, Social Media Tracker, Public/Policy Positions, Elections Program, Press Statements)
		3.2 % of SEs' communities members who perceive that the advocacy actions are effective towards an enhanced legal environment	0	80%	75%	94%	Through surveys after each activity where possible, action-learning research
Outputs	Op. 1.1. EDPU members lead on policy discussions on common socio-economic developments	1.1.1.Number of EDPU members that participate in the co-design workshops that take place to develop the Unit's advocacy strategy and action plan	0	4	56	1.400%	Project Records, attendance sheets
		1.1.2 % of the EDPU members that perceive that they actively participated in the development of the advocacy strategy and action plan	0	90%	100%	111%	Survey, post workshop evaluations
	Op. 1.2. EDPU develops evidence-based data to influence actions	1.2.1.Number of evidence-based policy documents (e.g. policy brief, policy paper) generated by the EDPU	0	15	19	127%	Period Research Papers and Policy Documents
		1.2.2.Number of evidence-based policy dialogue forums organised by the EDPU to influence policy makers and donors (adapted from the framework)	0	3	5	167%	Events, publications, roundtables
	Op 2.1. Community members are capacitated and supported on SE monitoring activities and tools	2.1.1. Number of individuals who benefit from the acquired social impact monitoring tools (disaggregated by gender, age, and nationality)	0	100	79	79%	Project records, meeting minutes, action-research
		2.1.2 - % of targeted community members and the monitoring unit members who express satisfaction with the delivered capacity development trainings (disaggregated by gender, age, and nationality) (EUTF RF #10)	0	80%	81%	101%	Automated questionnaire, survey
	Op. 2.2 - Existing SEs are equipped with strengthened skills and financial support	2.2.1 - Number of existing SEs with access to technical support	0	60	58	97%	Project Records, Coaches Reports
		2.2.2 - Number of existing SEs with access to financial support	0	60	60	100%	Project records
		2.2.3 - % of targeted SEs that report satisfaction with the technical support provided by the SESOs	0	80%	99%	124%	Endline Survey

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Final Value	% Achievement	Sources and means of verification
	Op. 2.3 - New models of social start-ups have access to tailored incubation programs focusing on social justice	2.3.1 - Number of new models of social start-ups that receive tailored incubation programs	0	20	21	105%	Profiling Tool and Database
		2.3.2 - Number of PAs (Public Administration) co-managing a SE with citizens and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	0	7	15	214%	Profiling Tool and Database
		2.3.3 - Number of public Vocational Training Institutions co-managing a SE with CSOs.	0	5	3	60%	Social Justice Incubation Report
		2.3.4 - Number of PAs adopting Social Public Procurement for community service provision.	0	3	3	100%	Social and Solidarity Economy study
	Op. 2.4 - SESOs technical capacity is strengthened to better respond to SE needs	2.4.1 - Number of SESOs that receive capacity development support	0	120	216	180%	Attendance sheets
		2.4.2 - % of targeted SESOs that report satisfaction with the hybrid in-house & interactive capacity development support modality adopted	0	80%	100%	125%	Satisfaction survey
	Op. 2.5 - SESOs collaboration is improved	2.5.1 - Number of joint coordination and convening meetings between members of the SE ecosystem, including the SESOs organized.	0	2	5	250%	Post-Networking Events Reports, Endline Survey
		2.5.2 - % of targeted SESOs that established new partnerships with other SESOs.	0	20%	66%	330%	Practice-based Research Report, Endline Survey, action-learning research
	Op. 3.1 - Members of the SE ecosystem in Lebanon develop a common advocacy strategy to promote SE in Lebanon	3.1.1 - % of the active SE community members who have actively contributed to the development of the SE advocacy strategy and action plan (disaggregated by gender, age, and group type (e.g. SEs, SESOs, academics, private section))	0	80%	75%	94%	Project Records, Meeting Minutes, Action-learning Research Report
		3.1.2 - Number of advocacy initiatives supported at the national and regional level (EUTF RF #43)	0	5	18	360%	Project Records, Policy Documents
	Op. 3.2: Members of the SE governance structure have increased knowledge and skills	3.2.1 - Number of SE governance body members trained	0	20	20	100%	Project Records, Attendance Sheet

ANNEX 5 – GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

SEE CHANGE BENEFICIARY SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: KEY DATA AND EVALUATION FINDINGS (I)

Share of Social Enterprises, by Governorate (N=58)

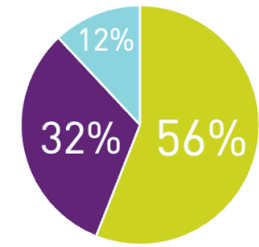


- 60** SEs received financial support
- 58** SEs received business development support
- 27** SEs received specialised technical support
- 21** SEs received top-up funding

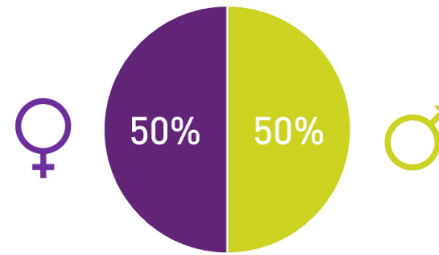
441 new jobs promoted by SEE Change SEs

234 Women (53%)
207 Men (47%)

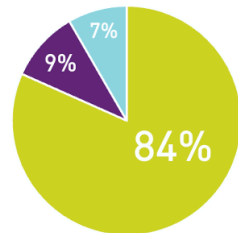
New jobs opportunities promoted, by nationality (N=441)



Gender of SEs' main owners (N=58)

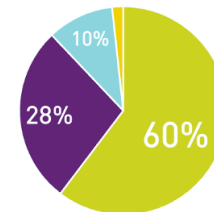


Nationality of SEs' main owners (N=58)



- Lebanese
- Syrian
- Palestinian

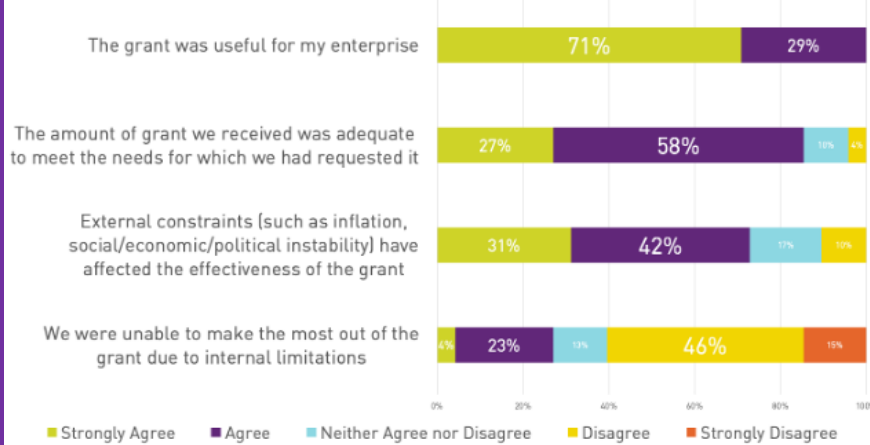
SEs' business development stage, at baseline (N=58)



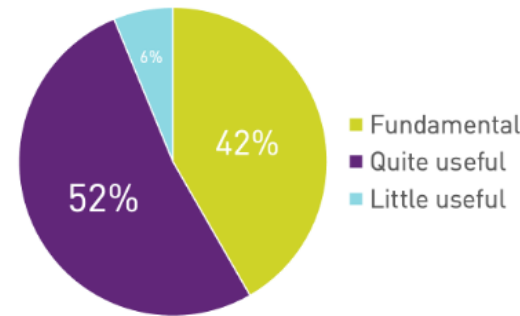
- Startup
- Maturity
- Pending
- Ideation

SEE CHANGE BENEFICIARY SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: KEY DATA AND EVALUATION FINDINGS (II)

SEs' agreement with the following statement regarding the financial support (grant) received from SEE Change project (N = 48)



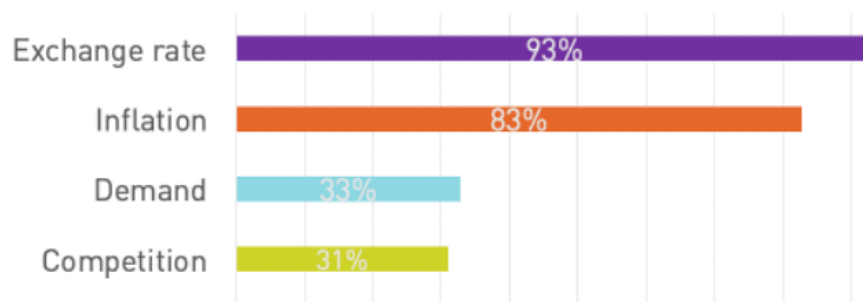
SEs' assessment of the usefulness of the business development support to strengthen their skills needed to manage their business more effectively and efficiently (N=48)



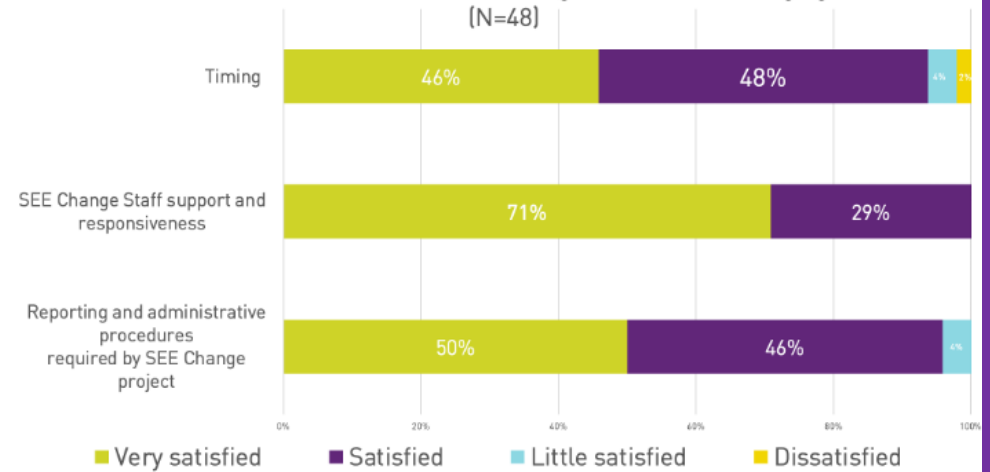
“ I am a technical person, so I used to care about only technical issues. I cared about hard skills more than I cared about soft skills. I was only thinking about cleaning forests, and I love what I do. But what I learned from this program is that soft skills in the business are more important than hard skills. This is really a life changing learning because now I started thinking business wise, because to keep going I have to make more profits and have strategic thinking. ”

SE interviewed by ARCO

Top 4 economic factors negatively affecting the SE (N=58)



SEs' satisfaction with the overall management of SEE Change grant (N=48)



SEE CHANGE ENGAGED COMMUNITY MEMBERS: KEY DATA AND EVALUATION FINDINGS

1.051 users who created an account on the e-learning platform

901 community members that have enrolled in the online social entrepreneurship course

397 community members that have fully completed the online training course on social entrepreneurship

498 Women enrolled (56%)

385 Men enrolled (44%)

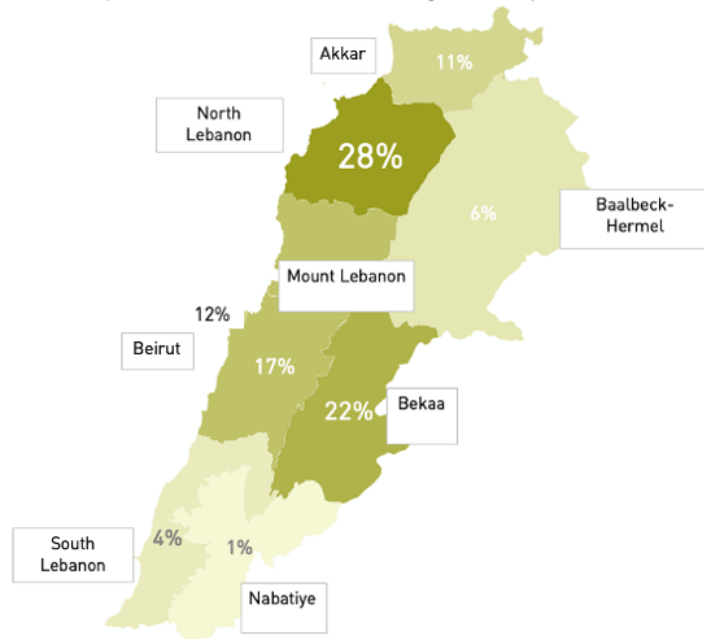
16 Community members supported the field research

6 Members involved in the Monitoring Unit

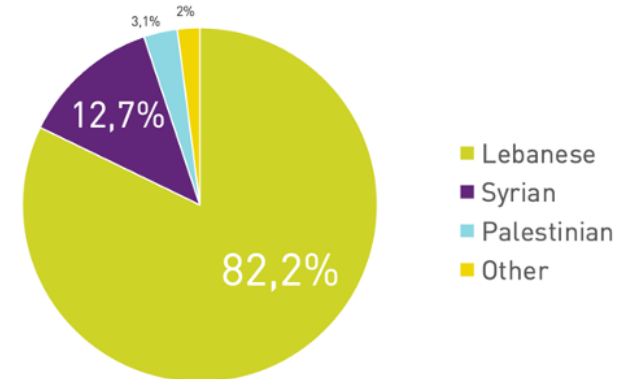
“ I benefited personally and professionally, (...) because now I understand how I can use these tools in my village. ”

Community Monitoring Unit member interviewed by ARCO

Community members enrolled in the training course, by Governorate (N=616)



Enrolled community members, by nationality (N=882)



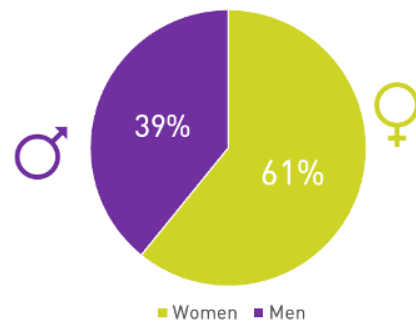
SEE CHANGE SJIP: KEY DATA AND EVALUATION FINDINGS

21 SJIP social initiatives receiving financial and technical support support
1.234 Total beneficiaries

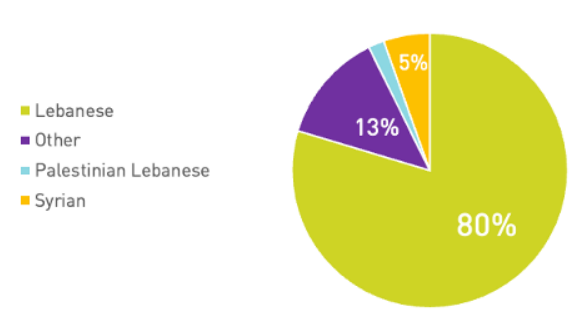
SJIP social initiatives, by Governorate (N=21)



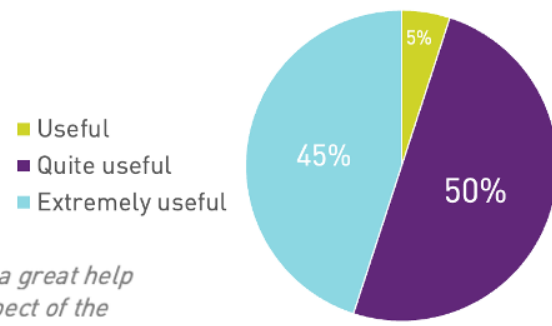
SJIP beneficiaries, by gender (N= 1.234)



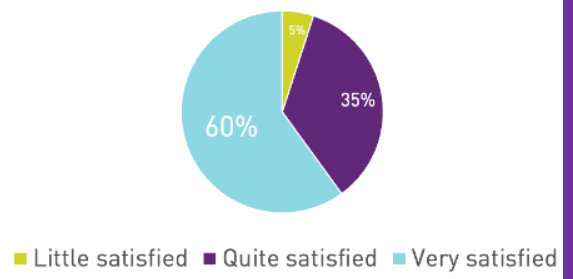
SJIP beneficiaries, by nationality (N= 1234)



Usefulness of the SJIP (N=20)



Satisfaction of the social initiative representatives with the design, management and delivery of the SJIP (N=20)

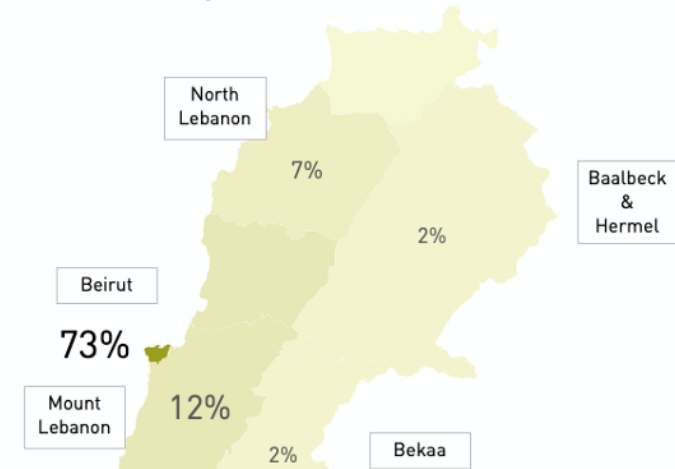


“ The financial support was a great help for us, and the most useful aspect of the SJIP incubation programme was when we went around Lebanon. Looking at other initiatives doing their projects we learned a lot. We gained ideas and knowledge on how to improve our initiatives and services for the migrant community in Lebanon. ”

SJIP initiative interviewed by ARCO

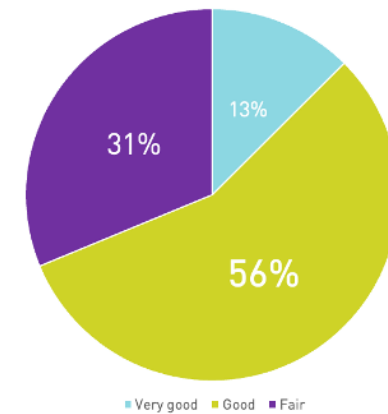
SEE CHANGE ENGAGED SESOs: KEY DATA AND EVALUATION FINDINGS (I)

SESOs attending the capacity building programme, by Governorate (N=41)

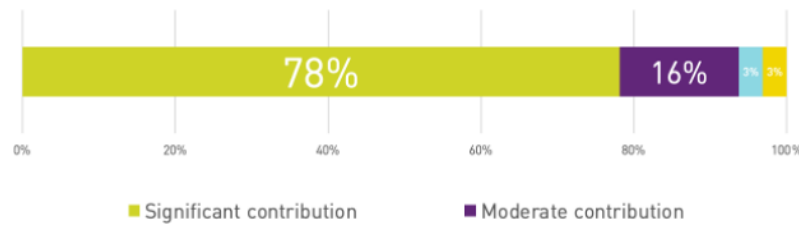


41 SESOs attended the capacity building programme
216 SESO representatives attended in the capacity building programme

SESOs assessing the quality of the provided technical resources to better support social enterprises (N=32)



Contribution of SEE Change capacity building programme to SESOs in terms of operations, market reach, or customer base (N=32)

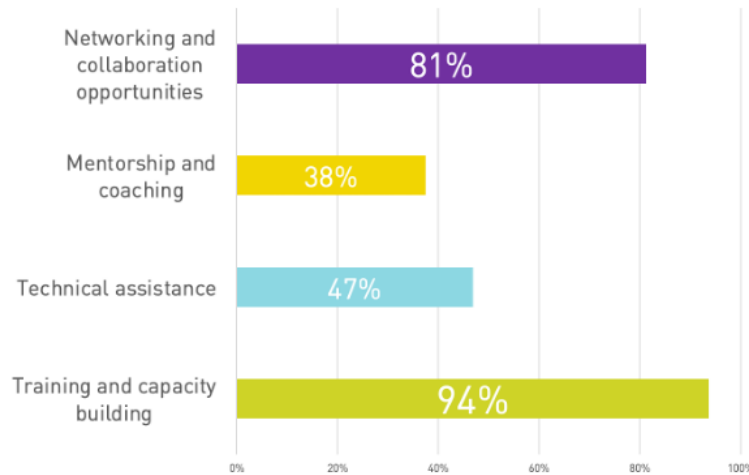


Relevance of SEE Change support to SESOs for the following aspects (N=32):



SEE CHANGE ENGAGED SESOs: KEY DATA AND EVALUATION FINDINGS (II)

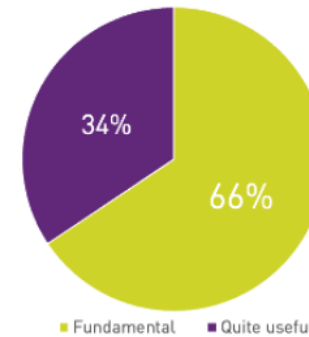
Most helpful aspects of the SEE Change capacity building programme to expand SESOs' operations, market reach, or customer base (N=32)



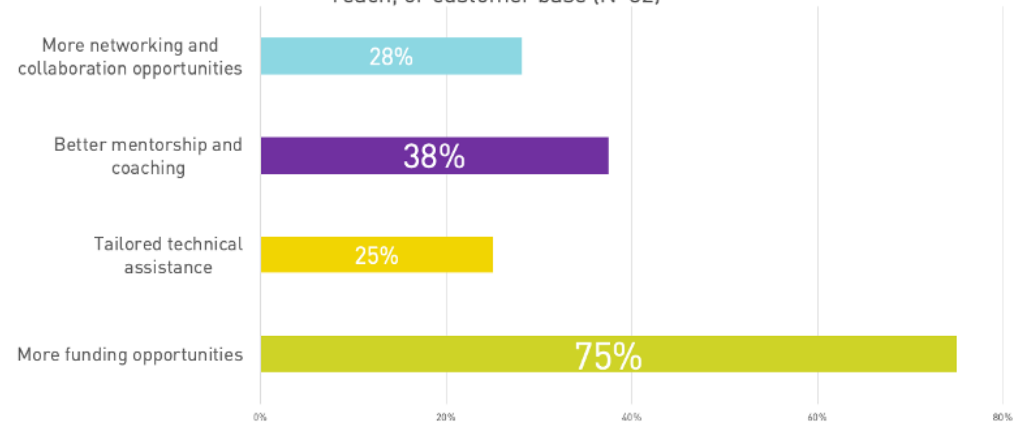
“ Under SEE Change, we gained valuable insights into building our capacity as a social enterprise support organization. Importantly, SEE Change encouraged us to explore access to finance for social enterprises. We identified that existing financial service providers generally catered to larger enterprises, leaving a gap for smaller social enterprises. Our involvement in the program led us to internally discuss the development of a specialized loan product for social enterprises, including policies and procedures. ”

SESO interviewed by ARCO

Usefulness of SEE Change project to improve SESOs' network connections with members of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Lebanon, including other SESOs (N=32)



Suggested areas for improvement of the SEE Change capacity building programme to better assist SESOs in increasing their operations, market reach, or customer base (N=32)



CASE STUDY 1: CAESAR’S FLAME SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
CAESAR’S FLAME

FOUNDER
YAMEN ABOUL HOSN (Lebanese)

YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT
2013

SECTOR
RECYCLING

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION
\$25,000

LOCATON
Mount Lebanon Chouf-Btkhnay



SOCIAL MISSION

AFFORDABLE ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

This social enterprise tackles **high diesel prices and scarcity** by replacing them with **cost-effective bio-pallets**. Simultaneously, it **reduces agricultural waste** being converted into these bio-pallets.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: *key phases, challenges & milestones*

The genesis of this social enterprise is rooted in the disillusionment of its founder, a civil engineer who found himself discontent with the transient nature of his work. The tipping point came when he realized the structural rules mandated the demolition of buildings every 40 years due to high humidity and salt in the soil. The realization that his efforts were essentially erasable left him yearning for a venture that would leave a more enduring mark on the world.

So, in 2013 the entrepreneur turned his attention to Lebanon's pressing **environmental concern**—the rampant forest fires devastating the landscape. Disturbed by the devastation and driven by a **passion to make a positive impact**, he envisioned **a venture that could simultaneously address the ecological crisis and provide an alternative energy source**.

The **initial phase** involved the establishment of a **biomass pallet production**, with a particular focus on pellet stoves, out of agricultural waste as well as branches and bushes from forest cleaning. However, an unforeseen **challenge** emerged—the high ash content in the pellets rendered them incompatible with standard stoves. This setback became a pivotal moment for the entrepreneur. Displaying resilience and a commitment to quality, he took the unconventional step of buying back over 150 stoves from customers to preserve the integrity of his reputation.

This setback triggered a **strategic shift**, marking the beginning of **a partnership with the founder's brother** who joined forces into **research and development**. By 2015, their collaborative efforts bore fruit with the **development of a new patented feeding system**. This technological breakthrough allowed the enterprise to successfully integrate this innovative system into a range of applications, including pellet stoves, boilers, and commercial air heaters utilized in environments such as greenhouses and poultry farms. Additionally, the system found application in furnaces catering to the needs of drying businesses, marking the beginning of a prosperous trajectory for the enterprise.

However, challenges persisted, notably the 2019 **banking crisis**, which **thwarted plans to construct a 1300-square-meter facility**. Despite financial constraints, the enterprise continued its operations from a smaller space, showcasing adaptability and resilience. In recent years,

another **significant challenge** emerged to secure a more abundant and diverse supply of raw materials to meet the growing demand for boilers. The woodchippers at the enterprise's disposal were **severely limiting the processing capacity** of the raw materials —an obstacle that hindered the enterprise's growth.

Against this backdrop, a **critical milestone** in the enterprise's journey was the **acquisition of a drum chipper thanks to SEE Change grant in 2022**. This **technological upgrade dramatically increased production capacity** from a mere 300 tons per year to an impressive range between 1300 and 1500 tonnes annually. Beyond addressing the immediate challenge of insufficient raw materials, the drum chipper became a linchpin in the **enterprise expansion**, enabling the clearing of vast land areas and solidifying its commitment to sustainable forest maintenance. Indeed, the enterprise managed to leverage a **successful circular business model in Lebanon**. It now offers a free service—collecting tree pruning from landowners to address the fire hazards prevalent due to neglect. This approach not only contributes to forest conservation but also fosters community engagement. More, tree pruning collection is carried out in strong collaboration with the beekeepers, making sure to leave specific types of bushes that are good for bees and honey production. Caesar's Flame has now established a **strong reputation** in Lebanon. Unlike typical profit-focused businesses, his **priority lies in environmental contribution, forest conservation, business expansion, and heightened customer satisfaction**. Notably, he forgoes traditional marketing channels, as customers discover him through recommendations and word of mouth, a testament to the founder's commitment to impact over profit.

The enterprise today remains steadfast in its mission, combining **innovation** and **environmental stewardship** to make a lasting impact on Lebanon's forests and beyond. More, recognizing the varying dynamics between residential consumers and larger institutions like schools, universities, and hospitals, today a **pivotal shift in the business model** has emerged. For residential clients, boilers are sold alongside affordable fuel. In contrast, for commercial entities, boilers are provided at no cost, with a contractual agreement for selling energy at a 40% lower cost than diesel. This approach is anticipated to accelerate the company's growth significantly, while allowing for the substantial savings for larger establishments like hospitals, amounting to estimated 30% savings which translate to significant amounts, such as \$300,000 for a hospital with a \$1 million annual energy expenditure.

This **dual-business model, born out of a shift in strategic thinking fostered by the SEE CHANGE program**, positions the enterprise for versatile growth and impact across different consumer segments.

MAIN CHALLENGES	MAIN ENABLERS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pellet Compatibility issue: The initial challenge arose when the pellets produced had a high ash content, rendering them incompatible with standard stoves. To preserve the enterprise's reputation after the pellet setback, the founder took the unconventional step of buying back over 150 stoves from customers. Financial constraints: The 2019 banking crisis posed a significant hurdle, disrupting plans to construct a larger facility and imposing financial constraints on the enterprise. Limited input supply: The existing woodchippers severely limited the processing capacity of raw materials, hindering efficient production and an adequate supply of raw materials for production, limiting the enterprise's growth potential. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership for R&D: A key partnership with the founder's brother facilitated research and development efforts, leading to the development of a new patented feeding system. SEE Change grant: The acquisition of a drum chipper through a SEE Change grant in 2022 proved transformative, dramatically increasing production capacity and addressing raw material challenges. Circular business model: Leveraging a successful circular business model, the enterprise offers a free service, collecting tree pruning to address fire hazards and contribute to forest conservation. Reputation building: The founder's commitment to environmental impact and customer satisfaction over profit has led to the establishment of a strong reputation, primarily through word of mouth. SEE Change support for strategic shift in business model: A pivotal shift in the business model, influenced by the SEE CHANGE program, has enabled the enterprise to tailor its approach for residential and commercial consumers, fostering versatile growth and impact.

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION



The SEE Change project played a pivotal role in supporting the social enterprise, **significantly influencing both its operational capacity and strategic outlook**. The **financial contribution** from SEE Change was primarily directed towards **acquiring a drum chipper**, a **crucial asset that revolutionized the enterprise's production capabilities**. This **technological upgrade** enabled a substantial increase in the annual production capacity from a modest 300 tonnes to an impressive range between 1300 and 1500 tonnes. The drum chipper not only addressed the immediate challenge of limited raw material processing but became instrumental in **expanding the enterprise reach**, facilitating the clearing of vast land areas, and reinforcing its commitment to sustainable forest

maintenance.

Beyond the tangible assets, SEE Change contributed to a **paradigm shift in the entrepreneur's mindset**. Traditionally focused on hard skills and finding technical solutions, the program instilled significant awareness of much needed **soft skills** in business. This shift in perspective prompted a strategic reevaluation, moving beyond focusing on the technical solutions to forest conservation to a **more business-oriented approach**. The founder's evolution from a purely technical focus to a nuanced **strategic business perspective** was a transformative outcome of the SEE Change program.

Moreover, the SEE Change support extended to fostering **business differentiation**. Recognizing the diverse segments within the market, the enterprise strategically tailored its product offerings to cater to varying needs and affordability levels. This approach included a wide variety of heating systems, accommodating different price ranges and quality standards. The enterprise's ability to differentiate its products based on market understanding and strategic thinking was a direct outcome of the insights gained from SEE Change.

“ I am a technical person, so I used to care about only technical issues. I cared about hard skills more than I cared about soft skills. I was only thinking about cleaning forests, and I love what I do. But what I learned from this program is that soft skills in the business are more important than hard skills. This is really a life changing learning because now I started thinking business wise, because to keep going I have to make more profits and have strategic thinking. ”

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

Looking forward, the entrepreneur emphasized the **need for future interventions to align with export-oriented strategies**. Given the economic challenges in Lebanon, characterized by a banking crisis and limited financing options, the entrepreneur highlighted the **importance of supporting businesses in exporting** a portion of their products or services. **Recommendations were made for future interventions to identify foreign market needs**, with the enterprise expressing readiness to explore new products such as charcoal, activated carbon, or other items that could find demand in the European market, for instance.

POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACT

The social impact pursued by Caesar's Flame is multifaceted and deeply rooted in its commitment to environmental sustainability, community engagement, and economic empowerment.

Circular economy and environmental impact

One of the primary forms of social impact stems from the enterprise's commitment to **forest conservation**. By utilizing agricultural waste and forest by-products, such as branches and bushes, the enterprise transforms these materials into biomass pellets. This approach serves a dual purpose: it minimizes the risk of devastating forest fires caused by neglected debris while simultaneously repurposing these materials into a valuable energy resource. The act of cleaning forests itself becomes a proactive measure against potential fire hazards, contributing significantly to the preservation of Lebanon's natural landscapes.

Job creation and economic empowerment

The impact on job creation is substantial, involving **direct and indirect employment opportunities** ranging from collection of agricultural waste and forest pruning (approximately 24 to 30 people according to the season), chipping process, manufacturing, packing, transportation, storage, distribution, marketing, and sales within the enterprise. Today, Caesar's Flame employs 23 full time staff (15 men and 5 women) and 7 seasonal workers (*Source: project documents_ SEE Change Job creation tracking sheet 09.10.23*).

Collectors, unemployed individuals aged between 14 to 45 seizing the opportunity to earn extra income by collecting tree pruning for the enterprise, do not receive a salary but are paid per output (amount of waste and pruning sold to the enterprise), an incentive strategy to create a win-win situation for both the enterprise and workers. Additionally, the enterprise collaborates with **local farmers** who benefit by getting paid for their agricultural waste.

Community engagement and awareness

Caesar's Flame goes beyond economic impacts, aiming to foster a **cultural shift towards environmental consciousness**. The enterprise **collaborates with local communities**, aligning its operations with the needs of **beekeepers** and involving **villagers** in the collection of pruning. By **raising awareness** about the significance of **forest conservation**, the enterprise aims to revive a **connection to the land and agriculture**. The focus on agriculture as a cornerstone of the economy encourages individuals to take pride in and care for their lands.

Social stability and poverty alleviation

The enterprise actively **contributes to social stability by creating job opportunities**, particularly in rural areas. More, the **affordability of the biomass fuel** directly impacts poor families, as it significantly **reduces their heating costs**. By saving on heating expenses, poor families can allocate more of their income to other essential needs, fostering economic stability and potentially support breaking the cycle of poverty.

Collaboration with public sector

The enterprise collaborates seamlessly with **municipalities**, receiving invitations to clean public lands due to its forest-clearing operations. This **collaboration serves mutual interests**, as the municipalities benefit from cleaner lands, and Caesar's Flame gains access to valuable biomass resources. The enterprise is also actively involved in the creation of **legislation** to prevent farmers from burning tree pruning. This collaborative effort contributes to environmental conservation and aligns with public sector initiatives.

[Empowering larger public institutions with sustainable practices](#)

The enterprise is extending its impact to larger institutions such as schools, universities, and hospitals by providing boilers at no cost with a contractual agreement for selling energy at a 40% lower cost than diesel. This strategic decision not only serves as a **catalyst for larger establishments to transition to greener alternatives**, but also frees **direct savings** enabling these institutions to allocate **more resources to their core services** (i.e., healthcare, education).

FUTURE SCENARIO

The future scenario for the social enterprise is one of **market expansion, product innovation and differentiation, and sustainability**. The founder's multifaceted approach encompasses not only **market growth and infrastructure development** but also a **holistic commitment to environmental stewardship and community welfare**. This comprehensive strategy aligns with the broader vision of creating a fire-free Lebanon while positioning the enterprise as a key player in the global market for **sustainable energy solutions** and related products. For instance, Caesar's Flame is **eyeing markets beyond Lebanon**, moving **beyond pellet production**, and venturing into **high-value products** like charcoal and activated carbon for the European markets. The enterprise vision extends to **opening a branch in Jordan**, leveraging its favourable market conditions including high diesel prices and abundant olive husks. More, despite economic challenges, the enterprise is committed to constructing a **larger facility**, providing the space needed for expanded operations, potentially reaching 8,000 tonnes annually. Additionally, next year, the social enterprise plans to initiate a **pilot project** by **planting thousands of fig trees** on previously cleared land. This project aims to replace wild bushes with fig trees, known for their minimal water and maintenance requirements, needing pruning only every few years. The entrepreneur, who also designs and manufactures dryers for fruits and vegetables, recognizes the **economic potential of figs**, especially with the **added value of the drying business**. The initiative extends beyond a mere pilot, incorporating a marketing strategy by attaching empty 200-liter barrels with drip irrigation systems to each fig tree. These barrels will bear the company's logo and vision, fostering **awareness** among villagers and the broader community about the purpose behind planting these trees and the positive impact on the local economy. This thoughtful approach aligns with the **enterprise's commitment to sustainable practices and community development**.

CASE STUDY 2: GREEN TRACK SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
GREEN TRACK

FOUNDER
KHODER EID (Lebanese)

YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT
2019

SECTOR
RECYCLING

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION
\$18,995

LOCATON
**North Lebanon,
Tripoli- Jabal
Mohsen**



SOCIAL MISSION

FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE LIVING THROUGH WASTE SORTING

Green Track Social Enterprise is dedicated to promoting **environmental sustainability** through **proper waste sorting practices at source**, while **promoting job opportunities for women and youth**. Its social goal includes focusing on **raising awareness** about the vital importance of waste sorting. More, the enterprise fosters **inclusivity and collaboration across diverse communities in Lebanon** to contribute collectively to a sustainable environment, fostering a **shared responsibility** for the well-being of both residents and their surroundings.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: *key phases, challenges & milestones*

In 2016, Green Track social enterprise emerged as a **response to the waste crisis in Tripoli**, where a massive landfill posed environmental threats. **The founder recognized an opportunity to address both the waste issue and unemployment, especially among women in the area.** Collaborating with her mother, a group of women was organized to raise awareness about waste sorting in households, which consisted of distributing brochures to the community urging to adopt recycling practices and requesting residents to place their recyclables in bags near their homes. Initial efforts focused on engaging 5,000 households in Jabal Mohsen for the collection of paper, plastic, electronics, textiles, and other recyclables, which were sorted and sold to recycling facilities. Daily collections were made from households, and while the response exceeded expectations, with many embracing sorting practices, resources remained limited. **Financial constraints** became apparent, leading the founder to personally invest \$10,000 to sustain the initiative for three months. Facing operational costs, limited waste quantities and lacking a dedicated warehouse, financial backing, or a solid infrastructure, the initiative struggled to secure operational viability. A significant **turning point** came when a **CSR program secured Green Track \$25,000 in funding**, enabling the purchase of essential equipment and addressing operational challenges. After that, Green Track started gaining visibility and its impact grew as it participated in multiple projects and collaborative efforts, such as initiatives with municipalities and local authorities, projects run by national and international NGOs, and other waste management companies. 2019 marked **another breakthrough** when Green Track applied for the **MedUp! project³⁸**, securing funding for bins and awareness campaigns in new neighbourhoods within Tripoli. Recognizing the city's socio-economic divide, two collection strategies were devised: door-to-door for economically vulnerable areas and centralized bins for wealthier neighbourhoods. This **strategic diversification of waste collection strategies**, supported by the MedUP! capacity building programme, enabled the project to cover 200 buildings as well as commercial establishments, fostering collaboration with businesses such as restaurants, shops, and mini markets. More,

in **2019**, the enterprise also formalized its status as a **small enterprise** and **NGO**, marking a positive impact on the community by **promoting job opportunities and environmental awareness**. However, **external challenges**, including a revolution, financial crisis, and the Beirut blast, led to a **temporary halt** in activities **between 2019 and 2020**. Nevertheless, Green Track founder kept being remotely supported MedUp!, managed to train 5 more people supporting the enterprise at management level and kept applying for other projects and initiatives. When applying to SEE Change project in 2021, Green Track was facing a critical electricity shortage, resulting in the warehouse operating only one hour daily due to the inability of the generator to sustain continuous operations, necessitating securing electricity and office space for employees. **SEE Change project** provided **crucial support** at this time, addressing the enterprise urgent needs (electricity and office space), enabling Green Track to **increase waste processing capacity and generate revenue**.

Since then, Green Track has experienced significant expansion, necessitating a move to a 2000-square-meter warehouse. The organization has **scaled up waste processing** from one to 30 tons per month, now boasting a **dedicated team of over 20 employees** overseeing operations and management **across ten areas**. They've integrated bailing, shredding, and are soon launching plastic cleaning, with support from other programmes, achieving monthly revenues between \$6,000 and \$8,000. While **close to covering operational costs**, an additional \$2,000 is needed, and the enterprise anticipates reaching **profitability by year-end**. The enterprise has adopted a **goal of having at least 50% of its workforce consist of women and young women**. More, Green Track is committed to **promoting social stability** by hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds, including Palestinian and Syrian refugees. Also, the enterprise is actively involved in **education and cultural**

³⁸ Implemented between 2018 and 2022, the EU-funded MedUP! project (EuropeAid/155554/DH/ACT/Multi) aimed at promoting an enabling environment in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) for the development of the social entrepreneurship sector as a driver for inclusive growth and job creation.

initiatives, aiming to **change mindsets**, especially in schools. Green Track's **inclusive model** transcends regional, geographical, and religious boundaries, **fostering collaboration among diverse communities**, despite cultural challenges.

With a current net asset valuation of over \$120,000, plans include **further investment in facilities to enhance processing capabilities and improve product quality**. More, Green Track has currently **secured remarkable partnerships** with national and international organizations like Oxfam, COOPI, Live Love Recycle.

MAIN CHALLENGES	MAIN ENABLERS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Financial Constraints: Limited resources, reliance on personal funds initially. 5. Limited input supply: Insufficient recyclables, impacting revenue and operations. 6. External Challenges: Revolution, financial crisis, Beirut blast, and COVID-19. 7. Operational Costs: Inflation affecting fuel, employees, and warehouse rent. 8. Infrastructure challenges: Electricity shortage and the need for a solar panel, limited warehouse capacity and office space. 9. Regional disparities: Challenges in waste cooperation between different communities. 10. Moving and expanding: Frequent relocations and pressure during expansion. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. First strategic funding: Secured \$25,000 through a CSR program, addressing financial challenges. 7. Strategic alliances & project funding: Collaborations with municipalities, NGOs, and international cooperation projects increased the enterprise scope and operational capacity. 8. MedUp! project: Secured funding for bins and awareness campaign and support for strategic diversification of waste collection strategies, allowing for resilience and adaptability to resume operations in 2021 after halt. 9. SEE Change support: Provided urgent support, addressing electricity and office space needs as well as regular support from mentors and coaches for strategic planning and development. 10. Strategic & important partnerships: secured remarkable partnerships with national and international organizations

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION



The journey of Green Track Social Enterprise has been marked by continuous challenges and the evolution of needs as the enterprise expanded. The initial hurdles, typical of a start-up, involved resource limitations and the need for basic equipment like trucks and bailers. As Green Track aimed for growth, challenges shifted to acquiring additional machinery like shredders and addressing electricity shortages.

The **SEE Change project played a pivotal role by providing crucial financial support to secure electricity**, allowing the enterprise to increase waste processing and revenue.

Moreover, the project's **business development support significantly impacted Green Track's operational efficiency**. With guidance from mentors and coaches, the enterprise formulated plans for capacity building in areas such as finance, marketing, and business operations. The support extended beyond financial aid, encompassing **tools for accounting, financial planning, and export strategies**. The SEE Change project contribution is evident in the tangible outcomes for Green Track. The secured electricity and **improved infrastructure** facilitated the enterprise move to a larger 2000-square-meter warehouse, enabling them to process 30 tons of recyclables monthly. The enterprise has **diversified its operations**, including bailing, shredding, and soon, plastic cleaning. **Monthly revenues have surged** between \$6,000 and \$8,000, bringing Green Track close to covering operational costs. Hence, the SEE Change project, by addressing key operational hurdles, played a vital role in propelling Green Track towards greater success and sustainability in its mission to promote environmental awareness and provide job opportunities in the community.

“ So, at each stage of Green Track's journey, we encounter distinct challenges. The challenges faced during the startup phase differ significantly from those when aiming to expand. The requirements and resources evolve accordingly; initially, a single truck and baler suffice, but as we grow, additional equipment such as a shredder and an extra truck become essential. On the managerial front, ensuring a steady revenue stream to compensate employees presents an ongoing challenge. During a critical period when Lebanon grappled with a severe electricity crisis, Green Track faced a unique obstacle. The warehouse operated merely one hour per day due to power shortages, hindering waste processing. To address this, we sought support from programs like See Change to secure a reliable electricity supply and establish an office space for our team to work efficiently alongside the warehouse. ”

POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACT

Green Track's pursued social impact is multi-faceted, encompassing gender equality, inclusivity, education, community engagement, and economic empowerment. Through its initiatives, the enterprise not only addresses immediate environmental concerns but also actively works towards building a more socially conscious and sustainable future for the communities it serves.

Employment Opportunities for Women and Youth:

From its inception, Green Track Social Enterprise has **prioritized the empowerment of women and youth**. The founder emphasizes the critical role of women in households, making them key influencers for waste sorting practices. With a commitment to employing at least 50% women and youth, Green Track aims to address unemployment challenges in Lebanon, particularly in regions like Tripoli. By fostering job opportunities for women and youth, the enterprise contributes to **gender equality** and **social inclusion**.

Economic Diversification for Job Creation

By promoting and investing in sectors related to waste processing and recycling, Green Track aims to play a role in creating jobs that contribute to the broader economic development of the country, **reducing reliance on traditional sectors** like tourism and banking.

Cultural Shift towards Sustainable Practices

Green Track recognizes the need for a **cultural shift** in waste management practices. In a country where disposing of waste in landfills has been a longstanding habit, the enterprise focuses on **educating communities**, especially the **younger generation**, about the importance of **sorting at the source**. Collaborating with **schools**, Green Track aims to instil a **culture of responsible waste management**, challenging ingrained habits and fostering a sense of environmental stewardship.

Inclusive Community Building Beyond Divisions

Operating in a region marked by **diverse religious and cultural communities**, Green Track takes pride in its **inclusive approach**. The enterprise actively hires individuals from various backgrounds, including Palestinian and Syrian refugees, **breaking down religious and cultural barriers**. By providing **employment opportunities without discrimination**, Green Track fosters a sense of **unity** and **cooperation**, contributing to social cohesion and stability in a region historically marked by community divisions.

Environmental Impact Beyond Borders

While Green Track's primary focus is on waste management and recycling, its **operations transcend regional, religious, and cultural boundaries**. The enterprise actively works to address environmental challenges that affect communities regardless of their background. By promoting environmental sustainability, Green Track creates a **common cause** that brings together people from different communities, fostering collaboration and shared responsibility for the well-being of the environment.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Green Track envisions a **dynamic and impactful future** as it continues to **expand** and solidify its presence in waste management and sustainability. The enterprise is poised for **further growth**, with a focus on **increasing its waste processing capacity**, **improving the quality of its products**, and **exploring new revenue streams**. The founder expresses a strategic intent to **invest more in facilities** to receive larger quantities of recyclables, demonstrating a **commitment to scaling up operations**. Plans include the implementation of **advanced processing techniques**, such as transforming plastic into granulated form, to diversify revenue streams and enhance the enterprise's economic sustainability.

Furthermore, the enterprise is currently **venturing into new projects and partnerships**, collaborating with organizations like Live Love Recycle, Oxfam, COOPI and others to implement impactful initiatives, such as **educational programmes** on waste management in schools and **cash-for-work projects**. This not only contributes to **environmental education and job promotion**, but also establishes the enterprise as a key player in broader sustainability initiatives.

The founder's emphasis on **maximizing profits for expansion** suggests a strategic orientation toward financial sustainability. Green Track's increasing asset valuation, from an initial investment of \$10,000 to over \$150,000, underscores the enterprise's financial growth.

Overall, Green Track's future scenario involves consolidating its position as a well-established social enterprise and in reaching a point where it can generate sustainable revenue, reducing reliance on external funds. Indeed, the enterprise is actively seeking strategic options and partnerships to support its ambitious expansion plans and broaden its social impact in waste management and job creation.

CASE STUDY 3: SALEM FARM SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
SALEM FARM

FOUNDER
SALEM AL AZWAK (Syrian)

YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT
2014

SECTOR
AGRICULTURE

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION
\$15,000

LOCATON
**West Bekaa,
 Al Marej**



SOCIAL MISSION

FOSTERING THE TRANSITION TO ORGANIC FARMING

Salem Farm champions a model of sustainable agriculture, not only enhancing the natural environment but also empowering and educating the community, fostering a cultural shift towards organic farming practices. More, Salem's model directly contributes to economic stability in the community by providing employment opportunities, skills development and generating revenues through ethical and sustainable farming practices.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: *key phases, challenges & milestones*

Salem Al Azwaq's journey from **Syria** to Lebanon and the establishment of Salem Farm social enterprise is a remarkable story of resilience and commitment to organic agriculture. In 2011, Salem and his family sought refuge in Lebanon due to the war in Syria. Unable to return, Salem registered with the United Nations as a **legal refugee** in 2012.

With a background in agriculture and a diploma in the field, Salem's passion for **farming** led him to explore opportunities in Lebanon. In 2015, despite financial constraints, he embarked on a **small project**, initially cultivating aromatic flowers on a modest area of rented land. Salem chose the **Mid Bekaa region**, overlooking the Ammiq valley and Lebanese mountains, as the location for his farm. Salem soon diversified his cultivation to include livestock, such as chickens and sheep. Living near a refugee camp, he capitalized on the surplus **food waste** by **recycling** it for his animals.

Salem's dedication to sustainable practices became evident when he **fully transitioned to becoming a certified organic farmer**, abandoning pesticides and fertilizers that harm both the land and the environment. Hence, Salem **expanded** his venture, renting an additional 8.500 square meters of land from the same landowner. He soon started attracting customers, creating a network that expanded further through partnerships with fellow agricultural workers in the nearby refugee camps.

The **turning point** in Salem's journey came when the **SEE Change project** reached out to him and recognized and supported his efforts. The project provided **financial assistance** and encouraged Salem to **expand** further, reaching over 10.000 square metres of rented land. SEE Change support included **transitioning to solar power**, which significantly boosted efficiency and progress on the farm. Additionally, the project provided

fundamental legal assistance, including the provision of an attorney, helping Salem navigate bureaucratic challenges and **register his enterprise**.

Salem's commitment to social impact is evident not only in his sustainable farming practices but also in **promoting job opportunities**. He employs a mix of fixed and seasonal workers, engaging both **Lebanese and Syrian employees**, with plans to create a **hub for training local farmers on organic farming techniques**.

Looking ahead, Salem envisions **further expansion** of his land, aspiring to become renowned among the community. He emphasizes the social impact of his work, using natural resources responsibly, limiting machinery use, and promoting awareness about the benefits of organic farming. Salem's journey exemplifies how one individual's dedication to sustainable agriculture can create a positive ripple effect, not only on the land but also on the community and beyond.

MAIN CHALLENGES	MAIN ENABLERS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Limited financial resources: Upon starting the project in 2015, Salem faced financial constraints due to limited resources. 12. Legal and Bureaucratic Hurdles: as a Syrian refugee, Salem encountered legal and bureaucratic challenges (i.e., impossibility to own land) 13. Transition to Sustainable Farming: Recognizing the harmful impact of pesticides and fertilizers, Salem faced the challenge of transitioning to sustainable and organic farming. 14. Cultural resistance: Salem faced cultural challenges where local farmers sometimes mocked his organic farming practices, suggesting that using pesticides could lead to more profit. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Key sponsor and strategic land lease: Despite initial financial constraints, Salem strategically rented additional land over time, gradually expanding the farm's footprint. This coupled with the landowner faith and strong belief in Salem's project potential. 12. Strong personal commitment: Salem's dedication to sustainable practices led to the abandonment of pesticides and fertilizers, promoting organic farming. 13. Partnerships: Collaborating with agricultural workers in nearby refugee camps allowed shared resources, i.e., collecting food waste from the nearby camp to feed his animals, minimizing costs and waste. 14. SEE Change funding and technical support: Financial support from the SEE Change project, initiated by Oxfam, empowered Salem to expand his farm and invest in sustainable practices, provided training opportunities, and facilitated Salem's transition to solar power, reducing electricity costs and enhancing farm efficiency. 15. SEE Change legal Support: the project provided legal assistance, including the provision of an attorney, helping Salem navigate bureaucratic challenges and register his enterprise. 16. Loyal local customer base: the quality and safety of produced agricultural products and Salem's decision to sell at market prices without aspirations for profit-making endeared him to local customers, fostering a stable income source.

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION



The SEE Change project played a pivotal role in empowering Salem Farm, providing instrumental support across various facets of the enterprise. As previous applicant to Badael project³⁹, SEE Change reached out to Salem and investigated his aspirations for the farm. Salem, driven by a **commitment to organic farming and ecological responsibility**, expressed his desire to expand his land rather than merely maximize profits. Once selected for the project, Salem did not even wait to receive the grant and swiftly turned to the land lord to ask for an additional square meters of land for rent. Remarkably, this move was met with the generosity of the landowner, who offered an **additional 7000 square meters**, demonstrating a strong belief in the project's potential.

“ *As a Syrian refugee, I faced a lot of problems not because of the people but because of the government when it comes to my documents. If Oxfam had not helped me and sent me an attorney, I would not have been able to register my enterprise.* ”

SEE Change grant allowed the Farm's **transition to solar power** which marked a significant milestone for enterprise, not only reducing electricity costs but also enhancing overall efficiency. Beyond financial aid, SEE Change provided **invaluable expertise**, sending experts to assist with business management and accounting. Addressing Salem's computer illiteracy, SEE Change sent experts to help him set up essential tools to support business management (i.e. using excel). The ongoing support and meticulous follow-up from SEE Change showcased a dedication to Salem's success that surpassed mere financial contributions.

More, the provision of a **dedicated attorney** was particularly transformative, overcoming bureaucratic hurdles and **enabling Salem to register his enterprise as a legal entity**.

³⁹ Implemented between 2017 and 2020, the EU MADAD-funded BADAEL project -*Building Alternative Development Assets and Entrepreneurial Learning*- aimed at social stability and community resilience through enhancing the communities' understanding of socio-economic opportunities and resilience assets, by strengthening the individuals' skills to identify and engage in innovative sustainable solutions, while promoting social entrepreneurship as a mechanism for civic engagement.

POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACT

Salem Farm consciously **chooses social impact over maximizing profits**. The enterprise serves as a **model of sustainable agriculture**, not only enhancing the natural environment but also **empowering and educating the community**, fostering a **cultural shift towards organic farming practices**. More, Salem's model directly contributes to **economic stability** in the community by providing **employment opportunities** and generating revenues through ethical and sustainable farming practices.

Environmental Sustainability

Salem Farm's commitment to sustainable and organic farming practices showcases a profound environmental impact. By exclusively utilizing natural resources, Salem minimizes the ecological footprint of his agricultural operations. The farm's diversified approach, moving away from monocultural farming, contributes to **preserving biodiversity** and ensuring the **health of the local ecosystem**.

Inclusive employment and Livelihood Opportunities

“ *I did not allow my profit to increase. Rather, I employed more people.* ”

Salem's unwavering **commitment to fostering job opportunities** transcends profit-driven motives, exemplifying his dedication to community welfare. A poignant demonstration of this commitment lies in Salem's deliberate choice to **forgo labour-saving machinery**, a decision driven by his belief in preserving employment opportunities. This deliberate approach becomes especially pivotal in the context of countering the rising unemployment rates linked to the mechanization prevalent in larger, more industrialized farms. With a profound

understanding of the challenges faced in traditional agricultural settings, Salem aspires to create a workplace markedly different from his own experiences. He proudly guarantees a **secure and healthy work environment**, void of harmful chemicals and pesticides, ensuring the **well-being of his workforce**.

More, Salem Farm **employs many Syrian refugees** seeking livelihood opportunities in Lebanon. By providing employment to Syrian men and women, Salem extends a lifeline to those who may face challenges in securing work due to their refugee status, positively supporting their livelihood opportunities and social integration.

Salem's farm also **actively engages women in agricultural activities**, particularly during harvest times, recognizing their effectiveness in tasks like flower cultivation.

Skill Development for Sustainable Farming

Beyond job provision, Salem Farm takes a **proactive stance in skills development**. Employees receive **training in organic farming practices**. This commitment to education ensures that seasonal workers not only contribute to the farm's productivity but also carry valuable knowledge, potentially influencing farming practices elsewhere. Hence, Salem's approach goes beyond short-term employment; it lays the groundwork for a **sustainable, knowledge-driven transformation in agricultural practices**, in alignment with a broader ambition of promoting organic farming practices in Lebanon.

Community Education and Awareness

Salem's efforts extend beyond his farm, **inspiring neighbouring farmers to reconsider their practices and adopt more sustainable methods**. Despite facing scepticism and occasional mockery from neighbouring farmers, Salem actively engages with his community, offering assistance and sharing his knowledge. His initiative to provide **free help in natural fertilizing practices** reflects a genuine desire to uplift those around him. While some initially scoff, others witness the success of Salem's methods and gradually adopt organic practices. For instance, one neighbour has embraced organic farming by using a greenhouse for vegetable cultivation, showcasing the transformative power of Salem's influence.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Salem's vision for the future transcends the boundaries of his expanding farm, resonating with a **commitment to educate and inspire a wider community on the virtues of organic farming**. At the heart of his aspirations lies the dream of establishing a **training lab**—a dedicated space **for the dissemination of knowledge on organic agricultural practices**. This envisioned hub stands as a testament to Salem's ambition to not only cultivate crops but also cultivate minds, creating a ripple effect that extends far beyond the confines of his own fields. The unique approach Salem adopts in his workforce becomes a strategic tool in realizing this dream. By engaging many workers, Salem envisions a continuous cycle of learning and teaching. Each worker, harvesting flowers today, could become an educator for another farm miles away tomorrow. This ambitious plan aims to bridge the knowledge gap, especially targeting farmers unfamiliar with organic farming.

“ I really want to implement this project and what I do is that I bring different people to work for me and to harvest my flowers so that I could train as many people as possible. An employee that works for me today, tomorrow will work for someone else 15 km away from me and as such they would carry all the teachings I gave them. There are many farmers and even agricultural engineers in Lebanon and Syria who don't know that there are people who are farming organic products. ”

Despite the current focus on the day-to-day operations and the extensive expansion of his land, Salem acknowledges the importance of **securing other grants for future endeavours**. His desire to obtain funding aligns with the broader vision of expanding his land and, consequently, his influence within the community. While Salem expresses a wish to explore grants, he recognizes the challenge amidst the demands of continuous agriculture. The emphasis, for now, remains on **consolidating and enhancing his existing operations**, underlining the dedication to organic farming principles and sustainable practices.

CASE STUDY 4: “TRES MARIAS” MIGRANT COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

ORGANISATION
Tres Marias – Migrant Community Organisation

YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT
2020

LOCATION
Beirut

REPRESENTATIVE
MYRA ARAGON (Filipino)

SOCIAL INITIATIVE
Community-led skills development for Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon

OTHER ORGANISATIONS OF THE SOCIAL INITIATIVE
Egna Legna, Together Forever, Alliance of domestic workers

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION
\$20.000



SOCIAL MISSION

EMPOWERMENT OF MIGRANT COMMUNITY

Tres Marias is an association led by migrant women committed to support the social **integration of the migrant community within society**. The main objective is to **empower migrant domestic workers (MDWs)** by offering **humanitarian relief** and **free vocational skills** training to **improve their job opportunities**, therefore achieving more **productive and self-reliant livelihood**.

HISTORY OF TRES MARIAS: *key phases, challenges & milestones*

In 2020, against the backdrop of Lebanon's economic downturn and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tres Marias emerged as a **response to the multifaceted challenges confronting the Filipino community in Lebanon**.

Out of a population of approximately 34,000 Filipinos living in Lebanon at that time, only a small percentage possessed legal documents allowing to benefit from official aid during the pandemic period, a complex reality that required urgent attention from community leaders.

In response to the needs of the migrant Filipino community, Tres Marias, consisting of three dedicated women, initiated the “50,000-lira Challenge”, a crowdfunding action to start a food distribution initiative. This collective effort became the catalyst for the **inception of a more structured food relief operation—an essential response to the immediate struggles faced by the migrant community during those turbulent times**. The positive response from the Filipino community drove the distribution of essentials—rice, lentils, noodles, sardines, and sugar—**reaching even the farthest corners of Lebanon**, including Tripoli in the North and areas in the South. The impact of the food relief initiative was substantial, reaching over 5,000 beneficiaries through bi-weekly distributions, with an average of 304 beneficiaries per distribution. Nevertheless, the distribution efforts faced hurdles considering the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns which posed challenges of blocked roads and restrictions. Still, the dedicated team of four, which included a Filipino priest and three Tres Marias members, **displayed unwavering commitment by finding ways to reach beneficiaries in need**.

As the food relief initiative progressed, **additional challenges faced by the community surfaced, prompting the association to realise that the food relief project was not a sustainable long-term solution.** Furthermore, Tres Marias members shared a genuine concern about avoiding the unintentional creation of a community dependent on aid rather than fostering self-sufficiency.

The year 2022 marked a turning point as **Tres Marias strategically shifted its approach, introducing free vocational skills training as a potent means of empowerment. SEE CHANGE - Social Justice Incubation Programme (SIIP)** supported this shift, sustaining the project aimed at empowering MDW women community leaders with skills and tools to ensure they can adequately support their community members in their daily lives or income-generating activities. The primary goal was not only to address immediate needs but also **to equip the migrant community with skills that could increase their job opportunities and foster their economic independence and sustainability.** Initially, Tres Marias started off with candle-making and food preservation classes, responding to specific needs identified. The idea of producing candles was aimed at **alleviating the impact of electricity shortages** in Lebanon, particularly benefiting migrant workers unable to bear the costs of generator usage. As time progressed, the initiative transitioned from basic candle production to scented variants, which was driven not only by the functional utility of candles but also by the possibility of marketing these products.

As the journey evolved, the association **expanded its repertoire of vocational skills training**, offering an array of classes in organic soap making, accessories and jewellery crafting, sewing, food preservation, and even hair cutting, aiming **to ensure a diverse skill set for migrant participants. Indeed, recognizing the importance of aligning with demand, the association continues adapting its training to beneficiaries' needs and requests.**

Another turning point for Tres Marias' development was acknowledging the potential of producing goods beyond the training purposes, which led to the establishment of a **physical shop.** This space not only serves as a display for the products crafted during vocational skills training but also provides a platform for selling these items and generating income for the association. **This endeavour exemplifies the association's commitment to reach sustainability and economic independence .**

The **legal registration** of the migrant-led association encounters significant barriers due to the challenges imposed by the **Kafala system⁴⁰ in Lebanon.** While the option to register in Lebanon, involving Lebanese individuals within the organization, exists, Tres Marias is cautious about pursuing this route. Instead, they are actively addressing these challenges by considering registration in the Philippines. This strategic option would uphold Tres Marias' status as a migrant-led association, safeguarding against potential loss of control and ensuring a solid commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by the migrant population.

Moreover, the association is actively promoting **advocacy and awareness initiatives** targeting the migrant population. These endeavours are aimed at disseminating knowledge about fundamental rights and promoting health to empower the migrant community. Advocacy initiatives also extend to targeting policymaking, advocating for the rights of MDWs and fighting against discrimination faced by the migrant community.

Looking ahead, Tres Marias envisions a future filled with continued training diversity for migrant communities and the enhancement of the physical shop as an economic resource to sustain the organization's advocacy and training initiatives. However, the path ahead involves securing additional funding for equipment and upgrading skills training to meet evolving needs with the ultimate aim of establishing as an economically independent association.

MAIN CHALLENGES	MAIN ENABLERS
<p>15. Covid-19 restrictions: Tres Marias distribution efforts faced hurdles due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, road blockages and restrictions.</p> <p>16. Sustainability constraints: Tres Marias soon realised that the food relief initiative was not a sustainable long-term solution and also entailing a risk of community dependency on aid rather than fostering self-sufficiency.</p> <p>17. Kafala System and challenging access to finance: the Kafala system in Lebanon poses significant hurdles to registering the migrant association, impacting their legal status and the possibility to access grants and funding opportunities.</p> <p>18. Cultural prejudices: the Migrant Domestic Workers community suffers from stereotypes and prejudices affecting their inclusion in Lebanese society.</p>	<p>1. Dedicated & committed Team: The remarkable commitment and dedication of the team led to the establishment of the Tres Marias organisation to support the migrant community. Throughout the journey, their unwavering dedication allowed them to overcome logistical challenges and ensuring the success of initiatives.</p> <p>2. Crowdfunding: a crowdfunding initiative was the first step to launch the food relief operation during COVID-19.</p> <p>3. Community Engagement: The positive response from the community indicates a strong sense of solidarity and engagement, providing a foundation for collective efforts.</p> <p>4. Strategic shift from aid delivery to beneficiaries' empowerment: Introducing vocational skills training provided strategic means for empowerment, equipping the migrant community with skills that foster economic independence and sustainability.</p>

⁴⁰ The Kafala system is a Lebanese restrictive regime of laws, regulations and customary practices that ties migrant workers' legal residency to their employers. As the Lebanese Labor Law explicitly omits migrant domestic workers, depriving them of the safeguards guaranteed to other workers (like a minimum wage, restrictions on working hours, a designated weekly rest day, overtime compensation, and the freedom to associate) their work is regulated by this system, creating an exploitative mechanism (Source: Human Right Watch).

5. **Contribution of SEE Change- SJIP:** The support from the SJIP enabled the launch of vocational skill trainings for the migrant community and fostered instrumental collaborations with other migrant organisations.
6. **Expanding Training Programs and adaptation to needs and marked demand:** The organization's ability to adapt and expand vocational training to meet the specific needs and requests of beneficiaries enhances the relevance and effectiveness of the programs, as well as the marketability of the goods sold to sustain the activities.
7. **From crowd-funded initiative to revenue-generating social business model:** Initially relying on crowdfunding, the project progressed to a more sustainable phase by including a revenue-generating activity (the selling of goods produced during the skills trainings). The aim is to evolve further into an economically independent model, indicating a shift towards financial self-sufficiency and sustainability.

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION



Tres Marias together with other MDW association in Lebanon, such as Eгна Legna, a collective of Ethiopian domestic workers, Together Forever, an association for Cameroonian domestic workers and the Alliance of Migrant Domestic Workers, jointly applied to the SEE Change- SJIP as a “Community-Led Skills Development for Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon” social initiative. The latter was selected as a “special initiative”, under the “Community Enterprise” SJIP sub-incubation program⁴¹. The initiative was considered meaningful for reaching social justice as it is a self-organised community initiative led by 5 women representing migrant workers communities. The **social initiative** focused on **empowering MDW women community leaders with skills and tools to**

ensure they can adequately support their community members in their daily lives or income-generating activities. Under the SJIP, Tres Marias together with the other co-applicant associations took part in a **Trainer of Trainers program** which involved hiring experts to train on candle making and food preservation participants, who then, in turn, disseminated the knowledge within their community. The training programme not only empowered the single organisations involved in the social initiative, but also facilitated their **close collaboration**, the creation of a **knowledge-sharing and resource-sharing network**, **strengthening the collective impact of the organizations involved.**

In the history of Tres Marias, the **SJIP program under SEE Change project played a crucial role, offering vital technical support and financial backing** that allowed the organization to initiate and expand its impactful projects. As an **unregistered entity** obtaining funding presented a significant challenge, hence making the SJIP contribution instrumental and a **unique opportunity** to pursue its goals. As per the technical support, the SJIP not only facilitated candle and food preservation classes but also acted as a **catalyst for diversified vocational training**, including upcycling initiatives. Another standout feature of the SJIP was **the opportunity to frequently meet and explore the other supported social initiatives throughout all Lebanon** during the programme networking “MeetUps”. This experience facilitated observation and learning from diverse projects, offering valuable insights, ideas, and knowledge for Tres Marias. As a result, they were empowered to refine and enhance their initiatives and services for the migrant community in Lebanon. Indeed, through the SJIP, Tres Marias has experienced a noteworthy **transformation in its networking opportunities**. Previously feeling overlooked, it now receives collaboration requests from other initiatives, establishing strategic connections and partnerships. **This shift from anonymity to recognition reflects the organisation's growth and increased visibility within a broader community of initiatives.** The SJIP acted as a catalyst, **expanding its network and fostering collaboration** with like-minded organizations. As a result, Tres Marias outreach extended beyond the Filipino community, **reaching diverse migrant groups**. Building connections with leaders from these communities, Tres Marias actively engaged and invited participants from various backgrounds to benefit from the free training sessions, ensuring **inclusivity and a broader impact of its initiatives.**

“ I see now they want to collaborate on some projects, they want to introduce themselves of what they are doing and ask us if we are interested to also join in what they are doing. Before, nobody knew us. Nobody wanted us or nobody wanted to acknowledge us, but from this SJIP, we grew our contacts. Before the SJIP, when they saw us in the street, maybe they knew us only for our capacity of taking care of the family cleaning houses. But now they are reaching out to us ”

⁴¹ Under SEE Change, the SJIP has supported 21 social initiatives divided into 4 sub-programs: (i) School enterprise: dedicated to co-production between public VTI (vocational technical institutes) and SMEs; (ii) Community enterprise: targeting multi-actor co-production involving citizens, social enterprises, SMEs, and municipalities for the regeneration of rural and urban areas; (iii) NGOs in transition: for not-for-profit organizations transitioning into a more entrepreneurial model; (iv) Public-Private Partnership program: to support partnerships between social enterprises and public authorities in managing community-based services and underutilized public assets. The SJIP included technical, financial and non-financial support and participation to community/networking events.

POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACT

The activities carried out by the Tres Marias generate positive and multifaceted effects on the migrant population:

Training and economic empowerment for migrant domestic workers

The association is dedicated to supporting the migrant community by providing opportunities to acquire new technical skills. This initiative is aimed at enhancing the **potential for securing employment, and opportunities for economic independence and sustainability**, in a context of economic crisis, that exacerbated the vulnerability of the migrant community. Furthermore, the enrolment of MDWs in these courses had unforeseen positive effects on the relationships between course participants and their employers, who show interest and appreciation in the initiative and become willing to facilitate the attendance of their workers. Hence this engagement cultivates **understanding, appreciation and acceptance between employers and MDWs**.

Women empowerment

Tres Marias stands as an example of **women empowerment, rooted in its identity as a women-led feminist organization**. The commitment to uplift women is evident in its initiatives as vocational training primarily targets women, aligning with the organization's core mission to empower them, **emphasizing the organization's dedication to providing alternative avenues for women beyond traditional roles, and challenging stereotypes prevalent in society**.

Social integration of migrant communities

The association is driven by the aim of **fostering unity among diverse migrant communities**, recognizing their shared experiences and challenges. Their initiatives serve not only to bridge cultural divides among migrant communities but also to facilitate their integration into the broader Lebanese society, aspiring to be acknowledged and accepted. Through this lens, the association emerges as a pivotal force in **fostering a more cohesive and harmonious environment** for all involved. While acknowledging the challenges inherent in achieving this vision, the association remains resolute in its commitment. Through targeted initiatives, **they have successfully engaged various migrant communities**, generating interest and active participation. The impact of these projects is evident in the ongoing inquiries about additional activities and the expressed desire for continued involvement.

“ *Social stability can only be attained when everybody is given the same equity: equal opportunities for everybody, no discrimination, when everybody is considered valuable* ”

Awareness and protection of migrant communities

Tres Marias actively engages in a variety of advocacy and awareness initiatives, for instance **conducting workshops to raise awareness** about basic human rights, ensuring that migrant workers, even under the Kafala system, are aware of their inherent rights as human beings. More, Tre Marias is committed to promoting and supporting the medical needs and mental health awareness of migrant workers, extending beyond domestic workers to encompass the broader migrant community in Lebanon. Additionally, the organisation promotes awareness on critical issues such as human trafficking. **To widespread their awareness initiatives the organization adopts a proactive approach to networking and collaboration with other actors and external experts**. For instance, workshops on human trafficking are being conducted in collaboration with **international organizations like the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM)** ensuring appropriate expertise and discretion for dealing with such critical issues.

Furthermore, Tres Marias takes part in initiatives aimed at politically advocating for the rights of MDWs and fighting against discrimination faced by the migrant community under the Kafala system. For instance, Tres Marias has recently been engaged in an initiative committed to include MDWs in the current work legislation in Lebanon.

Enhancing cultural diversity and social acceptance

Tres Marias attempts to **foster a spirit of cultural acceptance within the community**, recognizing and celebrating the diversity that characterizes it. An example of this commitment are the cultural events the association organises across Lebanon, where Filipino culture and others take centre stage. The underlying motivation is to showcase the unique cultures of migrants, conveying to the Lebanese community that diversity can be a unifying force. By promoting acceptance, Tres Marias aims **to cultivate a deeper understanding and acceptance among the local population for their migrant employees, fostering a harmonious coexistence grounded in mutual acceptance of distinct cultural backgrounds**.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Looking at the organization's future trajectory, Tres Marias has the **aspiration to diversify its training initiatives**, with a remarkable commitment to imparting a comprehensive skill set to the migrant community. Plans for the **existing physical shop**, currently serving as a foundational platform for sustained advocacy and training activities, extend beyond its current capabilities, **aiming to secure additional funding for the acquisition of equipment to offer a broader spectrum of skills training**. While Tres Marias adeptly maintains its ongoing activities, there's an acknowledgement of the imperative for continuous upgrades to align with evolving needs and ambitions.

The organization expresses the hope and necessity for further financial support at this stage, essential for sustaining and expanding its initiatives, encompassing a more extensive range of vocational skills. The ultimate goal of the association is to attain economic independence, emancipating from external funding.

Beyond financial considerations, Tres Marias confronts a pressing concern: **the need for its legalization**. The absence of official registration in Lebanon poses challenges, prompting the organization to seek assistance in navigating the complexities of legal recognition for a migrant-led association. Tres Marias has the option to register the association in the Philippines, as registering in Lebanon necessitates having at least one Lebanese member. Tres Marias emphasizes their commitment to maintaining an approach rooted in migrants' perspectives, deeming it more empathetic and better equipped to address the community's needs. The overarching objective is to attain legal recognition, surmounting hurdles and uncertainties, thereby ensuring the stability requisite for the organization to thrive and perpetuate its meaningful impact on the migrant community.

CASE STUDY 5: THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE'S "AGRICULTURAL REVIVAL PROGRAMME"

ORGANISATION

National Development Committee

YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT

1978

LOCATON

Nabatieh, South Lebanon



REPRESENTATIVE

HAFEZ EL ZEIN (Lebanese)

SOCIAL INITIATIVE

Accelerated Domestic Grains & Legumes Plantation (Agricultural Revival Programme)

OTHER ORGANISATIONS OF THE SOCIAL INITIATIVE

Lebanese Association for Urban Agriculture, Al Nebrass

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION

\$40.040

SOCIAL MISSION

IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY AND INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The National Development Committee is actively engaged in **sustainable agricultural development**. The organisation's "Agricultural Revival Program", launched in response to Lebanon's economic turmoil, tackles the heavy dependence on imported agricultural products through a sustainable model of increased domestic agricultural production. The primary objective pursued is **to ensure food security while fostering integrated community development**.

HISTORY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: *key phases, challenges & milestones*

In the dynamic landscape of Lebanon, the National Development Committee (NDC) emerged in 1978 as a non-profit organization with a mission for integrated community development. Officially registered in 1982, **the organization committed itself to societal improvement**, becoming a determined contributor to integrated community development across agriculture, health, education, technical training, and socioeconomic support for nearly three decades. A significant interruption occurred, leading to a pause from 2006 to 2020, rooted in the challenges posed by the civil war years from 1978 to 2006, underscoring the intricate socio-political landscape of Lebanon.

The narrative takes **a turn in 2020**, a year marked by economic challenges in Lebanon. Driven by a sense of responsibility and strong commitment, the three founders decided to revive NDC to focus on **sustainable agricultural development**. The structure was revitalised, and a strategic 10-year plan, the **Agricultural Revival Program (ARP)**, was launched in July 2020 as a response to a Lebanese key economic challenge: the **heavy dependence on imported strategic agricultural products**.

The objective of the Agricultural Revival Program is **to reduce the dependence on imported products through the enhancement of domestic production**. Specifically, the ARP **seeks to achieve a minimum 5% reduction in the importation of targeted products** within 6-8 years from the initiation of the project, maintaining a continual decrease in imports every 1-2 years afterwards. To reach this, the initiative concentrates on creating a **comprehensive framework that not only addresses immediate challenges but lays the foundation for long-term sustainability and growth in the agricultural sector**.

The program is designed to cover different value chains involving both plant-based crops (grains and pulses, seasonal vegetables and fruits, fruit trees, and animal feed), and animal-based products (poultry, cattle, and fish). Innovative projects like mealworm colonies and hydroponic sprouting of grains contribute to the program's **commitment to sustainability and innovation**.

In the context of a governmental and economic crisis, the choice was to enhance this transformation directly **involving the farmers**, as the first actors of this change. The program was conceived to be implemented in rural communities, identifying “operational units”, composed of interconnected villages and towns, that collaborate in production, services, and local marketing efforts. Any surplus product from different localities is aggregated into a central pool for marketing, with a primary focus on domestic sales in Lebanon and a secondary consideration for international markets.

The key objective of the plan is to ensure domestic production of diverse product types, creating a strategic reserve for Lebanon.

Recognizing the crucial role of farmers, the ARP **targets small and medium-scale farmers**, enhancing food security and fostering their knowledge and expertise through field-based training and workshops. The ARP, composed of several projects, is designed to follow an **ascending developmental trajectory in quality and volume**, achieved by progressively expanding the base of participating farmers who benefit from these initiatives. The project aims to contribute to the livelihood and income of participating farmers while establishing the essential infrastructure to support operations during the subsequent expansive phase.

The “Social Justice Incubation Program” under SEE-Change project specifically financed the “Grains and Pulses” value chain of this program, which is currently the most advanced initiative under ARP. The SJIP support arrived at a critical juncture, offering needed backing for the implementation of the program. The “Grains and Pulses Program” is strategically designed **to achieve a significant year-over-year expansion in the cultivation of wheat, barley, and pulses** with a focus on high-yield varieties for maximum production efficiency and sustainable productivity. As production scales up, the project places a strong emphasis on the development of essential infrastructure and cooperative machinery services, ensuring **equitable distribution of both production and services across Lebanon**, with particular **attention given to peripheral rural areas**, often facing challenges of high poverty and low food security scores. The project started in 2020 by planting 260 kilos of grains, with one farmer in one area of Lebanon. In the following years, the production increased to 2.3 tons (with 10 farmers involved per 6 areas) and then, with SJIP contribution, reached 12.5 tons (involving 56 farmers in 11 areas). The project operates systematically, with NDC providing seeds and continuous support to farmers throughout the growth cycle. After harvest, NDC purchases crops at a preferential rate, marking the transition to the second phase which involves meticulous processes like milling, sieving, and cleaning to eliminate impurities. A portion of the harvest is allocated for replantation, ensuring program sustainability, while the remaining portion is dedicated to processing various food products. The third phase focuses on marketing these products, primarily in local markets. A specific challenge emerges in timely compensating farmers for their crops, as they have invested throughout the season and urgently require payment when their produce is purchased in June for marketing. The complication arises from the delayed revenue, expected only in September or October. In response to this challenge, the organization is adopting a creative approach to its marketing strategy by actively seeking **partnerships with humanitarian organizations**, through which it secures advance funding, and facilitates prompt payments to the farmers. In return, these organizations receive products which they distribute to those in need.

The “Grains and Pulses” program deeply engages with the community, fostering relationships, providing support, offering training to farmers, and building essential infrastructure that enhances functionality, efficiency, and productivity. Moreover, the project allows farmers to benefit from group purchasing of essential resources (like fertilisers or medicines) resulting in significant cost savings. This **collaborative approach** extends to infrastructure development focusing on storage facilities, transportation, and machinery.

Farmers play a pivotal role in shaping the programme operation by sharing insights and participating in research and piloting studies. Beginning with six organizations, the initiative has sequentially expanded and currently operates with **23 local partners** throughout Lebanon (including NGOs, agricultural co-ops, private institutions, and SMEs) showcasing its growth trajectory.

In the process of implementing a new organizational and management approach, **the team sometimes faces the challenge of farmers’ resistance to change**. In response, the NDC’s approach involves an exchange of expertise with farmers, emphasizing that certain outdated practices need replacement. Instead of imposing changes, the team collaborates with farmers in training workshops over the years, providing tangible evidence of the benefits of adopting a new methodology.

Now almost in its fourth year since its relaunch, **the “Grains and Pulse” program has indeed experienced remarkable growth, significantly amplifying its scope and outreach from its inception.**

Looking ahead, the program is intended to continue its upward trajectory, with a dedicated focus on infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of a larger network of farmers and on increasing the proportion of the harvest dedicated to consumption. The project advancement and increased robustness played a crucial role in **broadening its network contacts, empowering NDC to successfully secure fundings** for forthcoming expansion phases.

MAIN CHALLENGES	MAIN ENABLERS
<p>19. Civil War: the association developed in 1978 interrupted its activities for 14 years, suffering the consequences of the Civil war in Lebanon.</p> <p>20. Funding landscape in Lebanon: the dominance of funding focused on training and cash-for-work projects and lack of long-term investments in impact and sustainability was a challenge in securing funds for the implementation of activities.</p>	<p>1. Strong commitment of founders: in 2020, the association was revitalised propelled by the strong commitment of the founders. Considering the overarching crisis in Lebanon, a specific emphasis was dedicated to sustainable agricultural development.</p> <p>2. Launching of a 10-year plan: NDC proposed a 10-year agricultural development plan, showing a strong strategic and long-term vision.</p>

21. **Resistance in introducing innovation:** the introduction of innovations in the agricultural sector poses expected initial resistance from farmers on the ground.
22. **Compensation of farmers:** having invested throughout the season, the farmers find themselves in urgent need of payment. NDC purchases their products in June for marketing, but income doesn't materialize until September or October.

3. **Availability of private funds:** The programme was initiated using private funds, which made it possible to lay a foundation to start the activities and have evidence to show for the later entry of external funding.
4. **Local farmer's involvement through an inclusive and interactive approach:** adoption of a collaborative approach, encompassing joint implementation and piloting of the initiative.
5. **Contribution from SEE Change-SJIP:** in the implementation of the program "Grains and Pulse" the SJIP supported NDC in a crucial stage of the program's enlargement.
6. **Securing funding for the future:** the project's progress and enhanced strength facilitated an expansion of network contacts, empowering NDC to secure increased funding for future expansion phases.
7. **Partnerships with humanitarian organisation:** to face the challenges of promptly compensating farmers for their crops the organisation established partnerships with humanitarian organisations to secure funds to bridge the financial gap between the purchase of products and the availability of revenues.

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION



The "Agricultural Revival Program" was included in the Social Justice Incubation Programme (SJIP) as a **"special collaborative initiative"**, not specifically corresponding to any of the sub-incubation programs⁴² while still considered an important initiative led by self-organized communities able to contribute the social justice. The program development led by the cooperation between NDC and a coalition of farmers and agronomists was considered impactful for its **cooperative bottom-up approach aimed at contributing to food security in Lebanon.**

The SJIP project has played a pivotal role in the transformative journey of the **"Grains and Pulse" program** marking a substantial impact on the initiative's trajectory. The SJIP supported a critical shift of the program, sustaining the planned transition from a modest-scale operation with 10 farmers to a more extensive endeavour involving 56 farmers.

The SJIP played an integral role in facilitating this transition, offering crucial support to realize the vision of the "Grains and Pulses" programme.

For NDC, SEE Change's support was essential in a challenging context where securing funding for long-term initiatives centred on agricultural production proves difficult. The program, which also provided valuable guidance and consultancy, allowed the long-term agricultural development initiative to access funds, boosting the project from one milestone to the next. The financial support played a crucial role in facilitating this transition and laying the groundwork for the next trajectory.

Furthermore, the SJIP gave **the opportunity to meet and explore the other supported social initiatives throughout all Lebanon** during the programme networking "MeetUps". These monthly meetings played a key role in fostering **collaboration and expanding the NDC's network**, allowing the organization to establish partnerships with other initiatives affiliated with the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

A recommendation for future interventions like the SEE Change SJIP concerns the project's future trajectory, namely proposing a concentrated focus on a short list of high-impact projects that have exhibited noteworthy results as the foundation for an advanced phase two of the SJIP. The goal is to empower these chosen projects with the requisite resources, expertise, and funding, facilitating their significant expansion while upholding the successful programme design and approach. Additionally, there is a call for heightened attention to be directed towards the agricultural sector, recognizing its strategic significance in ensuring national food security.

POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACT

The NDC's social mission is deeply rooted in addressing critical issues related to food security and fostering solidarity and a cooperative spirit among diverse communities. The strategic mission revolves around reducing import dependency by expanding domestic production, aligning with the broader goal of ensuring national and human well-being.

⁴² Under SEE Change, the SJIP has supported 21 social initiatives divided into 4 sub-programs: (i) School enterprise: dedicated to co-production between public VTI (vocational technical institutes) and SMEs; (ii) Community enterprise: targeting multi-actor co-production involving citizens, social enterprises, SMEs, and municipalities for the regeneration of rural and urban areas; (iii) NGOs in transition: for not-for-profit organizations transitioning into a more entrepreneurial model; (iv) Public-Private Partnership program: to support partnerships between social enterprises and public authorities in managing community-based services and underutilized public assets. The SJIP included technical, financial and non-financial support and participation to community/networking events.

Ensuring food security, resilience and social stability

The ARP showcases a commitment to concrete and vital goals for the country, **emphasizing the need for self-sufficiency in food production**. During economic turmoil, currency fluctuations, and external crises like the explosion in Beirut and the Ukraine war, the program demonstrated its significance in ensuring **food security and resilience**. Food plays a crucial role in maintaining **social stability** both locally and at the national level: facing the need for sufficient national reserves produced domestically **can reduce dependency on imports**.

Furthermore, an effort on **food security at the district-level** is enhanced: recognizing the challenges posed by the lack of storage facilities, the association is actively working to establish storage facilities in every district. This initiative ensures that each district has the capacity for local production, storage, and, ultimately, food security. This approach emphasizes a balanced expansion, encompassing all regions of Lebanon and promoting inclusivity in agricultural operations.

Fostering solidarity and cooperative communities

“ We have a motto that is that food should be protected from being interfered by politics or by any divisive issues. It should be a right for everyone and therefore, everyone should be able to participate in the program and benefit from it ”

The program aims to attract participants and partners from all areas of Lebanon, irrespective of religion and political affiliations. **The goal is to create a diverse and inclusive community that operates beyond divisive lines**. NDC’s approach significantly focuses on **keeping food separate from political or disruptive influences**, ensuring that it is accessible and beneficial to everyone, regardless of their political or religious background. Indeed, the ARP programme builds on a critical social aspect that is the cooperative spirit. The association succeeds in integrating all participants, ensuring that the program benefits each member of the community. Farmers and communities share a **sense of belonging and purpose**, finding hope and motivation in the cooperative model that represents and works for the benefit of everyone involved.

Enhancing the economic empowerment of the livelihood of farmers

A focus on farmers is a strategic decision embedded in the NDC’s mission. The program seeks to directly involve **farmers as the primary vehicles of change in this transformative process**. It operates within rural communities, fostering collaboration among interconnected villages and towns in production, services, and local marketing. The ARP targets small and medium-scale farmers, acknowledging their crucial role, and focusing on enhancing food security, increasing family income, and refining agricultural practices. The initiatives encompass training, practical knowledge dissemination, and the improvement of technical skills.

Ultimately, the project extends beyond immediate crisis response to **contribute to the long-term well-being and resilience of farmers and their communities**, fostering sustainable agricultural practices and supporting the future development of Lebanon. Looking forward, the project is laying the foundations for establishing special grain cooperatives in each district, allowing them to run their businesses independently.

“ The farmer is holding on his shoulders the whole risks: of climate, of land, of natural calamities and war. So, we try to shift the focus back again to the source, which is producing the raw material, and improving their livelihood, and in our opinion, that's what is key for sustainability. ”

Innovation and Sustainability

The program places a special emphasis on **researching and testing innovative interventions**. Piloting programs are systematically implemented, utilizing consistent benchmarks, closely monitored, and integrated for continuous improvement and scalability. An innovative approach is evident in the establishment of a circular system, merging regenerative agriculture and incorporating both animal and plant production. Notably, animal waste acts as a natural fertilizer for plants, resulting in a diverse range of products. Moreover, a commitment to innovation is shown in some innovative techniques are implemented such as cultivating mealworms for high-protein feed in chicken and fish farming and a calibrated hydroponic system sprouts grains like wheat and barley for green feed.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Aiming at achieving the Agricultural Revival Program, which is a 10-year plan, **the organization is currently engaged in a comprehensive effort with a focus on scaling operations**, as planned. The support received by SEE Change not only facilitated the organization's current operations under the “Grains and Pulse Program” but also played a crucial role in laying the foundation for the upcoming crop and establishing the next base. The success of the ARP Program, also thanks to SEE Change contribution, exposed the initiative to the interest of other projects which led them to obtain more funding for the upcoming development phase. The latter is projected to be five times larger than the current one, involving 240 farmers, and significantly increasing the cultivation from

12 tons to 54 tons. NDC consistently works towards **expanding its network of activists, partner organizations, cooperatives, and funding agencies**. The strategic cooperative approach adopted, which involved different players like NGOs working with grassroots farmers, SMEs handling processing and marketing, and local co-ops managing district-level operations, represents the basis for sustaining the expansion plan.

As they venture into this expansive vision, **the organization acknowledges the need for diverse support**. Financial assistance is crucial, but they also emphasize the importance of other forms of support. As they diversify food products, exploring different varieties, flavours, and packaging, they seek expertise to enhance processing capabilities which need to evolve to accommodate hundreds of tonnes. **This expansion requires not only funding but also a strategic overhaul in machinery, storage, and transportation**.

More, to face the challenges of promptly compensating farmers for their crops, as mentioned before, the organisation continues exploring new **partnerships with humanitarian organisations** to secure funds to bridge the financial gap between June and October. The organization plans to replicate and expand partnerships with other funding agencies, especially those with a focus on humanitarian aid.

CASE STUDY 6: ARTS & CRAFT WOODWORK SCHOOL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

SOCIAL INITIATIVE
Arts & Crafts Woodwork - school enterprise programme


START YEAR
2022

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION
\$42,000

SOCIAL INITIATIVE ENTITIES
Dekweneh Technical School
MDCN enterprise

LOCATON
Dekwaneh,
Mount Lebanon

REPRESENTATIVE
ANTOINETTE
KHANFOUR
(Lebanese)



SOCIAL MISSION

VOCATIONAL SKILL TRAINING AND JOB CREATION

Arts & Craft Woodwork is a school enterprise aimed at bridging the gap between the **need for skilled workers** in the job market and the search for **job opportunities**. The initiative supports the **development and refurbishment of furniture products of quality standards sold at affordable prices** while **offering training opportunities for students**. Furthermore, it serves as a valuable revenue-generating asset for the school during times of crisis.

HISTORY OF ARTS & CRAFT WOODWORK SCHOOL ENTERPRISE: *key phases, challenges & milestones*

Arts & Craft Woodwork is a school enterprise piloted at the Dekweneh Technical School (Mount Lebanon) a public technical vocational institute where various industrial specialities, such as woodworking, are taught.

A **school-enterprise** is a social business investing in the Vocational Education and Training Sector. It stems from the cooperation between Vocational Training Institutions (VTIs) and Social Enterprises or other private actors, to enhance the former transforming into competitive service providers while maintaining the primary focus on education. This model has been supported by the school-enterprise programme, co-designed by the Social Justice Incubation programme (SJIP) under SEE Change project, in collaboration with GIZ and the Lebanese General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE)⁴³.

The **Arts & Craft Woodwork** pilot started in August 2022, with the joint and coordinated support by SEE Change SJIP, GIZ and DGVTE. The project started with ad hoc training for teachers to strengthen their competencies with a Training of Trainer (ToT) approach delivered by GIZ, which was also involved in the ideation and drafting of training programs. More, funding from SEE Change allowed for the renovation of available infrastructures given the ageing state of the school workshop, equipped with outdated machines, and needing a significant investment in modernizing equipment to guarantee effective project execution. Hence, rigorous maintenance activities, from painting to lighting and ventilation upgrades, were carried out to prepare workshops for diverse projects.

The launch of the production units was possible through a collaborative partnership with a local enterprise which allowed the overcoming of challenges associated with securing donations for official schools without navigating bureaucratic hurdles. The strategic partnership with the enterprise proved instrumental, offering consultancy for the implementation of the project, with a specific orientation on the market sector,

⁴³ SEE Change project engaged 3 Technical Vocational Institutions (TVIs). SEE change and GIZ co-selected three TVIs that would act as “pioneers” and “tester” for this pilot program. Thus, in collaboration with the DGVTE the three identified TVIs (Ajaltoun, Dekweneh, and Batloun Technical Schools) were involved in co-designing their “school enterprises”.

and acting as a bridge with the private sector, offering contacts and networking opportunities. Indeed, as a technical school, **the link with the private sector is crucial to effectively contribute to job creation.**

The original productive focus of the school enterprise programme was on **supporting other public schools, universities and public offices by providing needed furniture at affordable prices.** This was aimed at offering services at a budget-friendly cost, benefiting public sectors while contributing to the technical school's financial well-being. However, a strategic change was implemented due to the economic challenges faced by the public sector that affected their possibility of buying their products. This led to a diversification of targeted customers as well as of the production scope expanding to affordable furniture for households (i.e., beds, tables, wardrobes, kitchen tables and chairs) to secure the sustainability of the project.

Art & Craft Woodwork school enterprise is now actively producing **high-quality products at affordable prices** while guaranteeing the Institute's delivery of **high-quality education and training courses** to equip students with **high-level skills required by the job market.** Moreover, the project also welcomes **external engineers and skilled technicians** with projects for execution: upon payment of a fee, these projects can be carried out in the school workshop, another revenue-generating activity which also contributes to the high-level training and expertise of the students.

Enhanced workshop facilities have played a pivotal role in fostering **collaboration between the school and private enterprises,** streamlining the **placement of graduates into companies actively seeking skilled workers.** This synergy, propelled by improved conditions, could lead to a positive shift in the dynamics between the educational institution and the private sector, creating a more uniform transition for graduates entering the workforce.

Additionally, as individuals working in woodworking often lack formal education despite having practical experience, the Art & Craft Woodwork school enterprise has **broadened its scope by offering affordable and specialised training courses also to participants from the school's neighbourhood** thanks to a supportive network of contacts in the area.

The Arts & Craft Woodwork school enterprise is currently steering its commitment to keep supporting the furniture production as well as venturing into other production lines. The school enterprise is up and running, having already received requests to undertake further projects in the woodworking lab. The evident success of the project, reflected in the growing number of production requests, along with the enthusiastic commitment of those involved, is anticipated to have a meaningful impact on the local community.

MAIN CHALLENGES	MAIN ENABLERS
<p>23. Lebanon contextual crisis: the multifaced crisis currently occurring in Lebanon also affected the public education sector. The difficult economic conditions of schools hinder the possibility of offering adequate educational services and exploring innovative pathways. More, the economic crisis not only impacts the affordability of course fees for students, but also poses obstacles to transportation, culminating in a reduction in student enrolment. This decline in enrolment subsequently imposes a financial burden on the school, exacerbating the challenges posed by the economic downturn. Additionally, the economic crisis severely affects school staff, leading to strikes and protests, a challenge which also reduced the personnel available to design and plan the school-enterprise programme.</p> <p>24. Barriers to secure funding and revenues: current Lebanese legal restrictions hinder the possibility for public schools to establish internal revenue-generating units. More, current regulations prevent schools from the possibility of receiving direct donations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support by the “School Enterprise Programme”: participation in this programme co-designed by SEE Change SJIP, GIZ in collaboration with the DGVTE represented an opportunity to enhance a piloting initiative that could pave the way for similar initiatives in the education sector. SEE Change provided financial resources to renovate the school infrastructure for the workshops and involved the team in the broader SJIP. More GIZ delivered the ad-hoc training for the schoolteachers and supported the ideation and drafting of training programs. 2. Seamless coordination among key actors to co-design, plan and execute the “School Enterprise Programme”: SEE Change SJIP, GIZ and the DGVTE established a working group to facilitate close collaboration to co-design the school enterprise programme, assess its feasibility and plan for its joint execution. 3. Strategic partnership with a private sector entity: the Institute’s connection with the local enterprise enhanced the initiatives, through a strategic consultancy and the creation of links with the private sector. Moreover, its involvement permitted the school to overcome bureaucratic obstacles faced in securing funds, as SEE Change funding could be channelled through the local enterprise. 4. Revenue-generating activities for the school: selling produced furniture to other public schools, universities and offices as well as households ensures an economic benefit for the Institute. More, welcoming external engineers and technical experts to execute projects in the school workshop also contributes to the revenue-generating intent to sustain the school. 5. A high commitment of the school: professionals involved in the initiative are highly committed to the project and its aim, a key ingredient to its successful experimentation. 6. Openness to the community: high-quality products are sold at affordable prices to the community. Additionally, affordable specialised training courses also welcome participants from the community.

SEE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION



The school- enterprise program component of the Social Justice Incubation Program under SEE Change project was developed in cooperation with GIZ and the Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education and Training (DGVTE) under the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). The school- enterprise program created the opportunity for three Technical Vocational Institutions (TVIs) in Lebanon to pilot school-enterprises in cooperation with the private sector. Identified TVIs became pioneers and testers of the pilot aimed at gathering data and experience to potentially establish a repeatable and scalable model in the future. Each TVI included in the program actively participated in the co-designing of their respective "school enterprises".

SEE Change-SJIP opened a **unique opportunity for the Dekweneh institute, allowing the establishment of a productive entity within the school**. SEE Change financial contribution enabled the revamping of current infrastructures, given the school workshop's deteriorating state. With the support of the project, the workshop has undergone a significant transformation, with proper restoration and enhancements which transformed it into an outstanding facility, **providing students with modern and well-equipped woodworking lab**. This strengthened the school's ability to have an effective functioning workshop to train students along with the provision of theoretical skills. The renovation of the workshop and the launch of the school-enterprise allowed the school to connect with the private sector, both as a productive workshop and by offering high-skilled professionals.

Furthermore, another standout feature of the SJIP was **the opportunity for participants to frequently meet and explore the other supported social initiatives throughout all Lebanon** during the programme networking "MeetUps". The latter offered a unique platform for valuable networking and provided the opportunity to establish a strategic web of contacts for future collaborations, significantly enhancing the viability of the initiative.

“ With this project, we've had the opportunity to have an entity that supports the school and we've had the opportunity to have short training courses for people who are looking for a job in the private sector, so, we can be of service to the school and even to the people around our school ”

POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACT

Addressing the educational gap to support employment

The primary social mission is to ensure **work opportunities for students and individuals**, particularly given the prevailing unemployment rate in Lebanon. The project emphasizes leveraging the expertise of experienced individuals to ensure the delivery of high-quality work. By doing so, the school enterprise aims to not only benefit individuals seeking employment but also supporting skilled professionals to access the labour market, meeting specific industry needs.

Considering the significant demand for trained individuals by the private sector, the project seeks **to bridge the gap between workforce demand and supply by providing education and skills to individuals**, contributing to the development of educated technicians within the private sector.

Supporting schools' financial sustainability

The school-enterprise initiative is situated within the backdrop of the Lebanese widespread economic crisis, significantly impacting the public education sector. Over time, educators have experienced salary reductions, sparking strikes and dampening their motivation. The economic situation also challenges students to participate in lessons, both for the cost of training and transportation costs. Schools, primarily responsible for covering their expenses, now face limited economic resources, threatening their sustainability. Introducing a **productive entity within the school**, and **generating economic returns**, emerges as a valuable asset for enhancing the school's offerings and fostering innovation. Therefore, the school enterprise not only advances the educational and training sector but also serves as a crucial **self-financing mechanism for schools**.

“ I'm very happy that the school-enterprise started to produce, to make returns for the school, and for the customers at a cheaper price than other companies. From this starting point, I can say that we can contribute to achieve a more stable society ”

High-quality products at affordable prices for the community

The Arts & Craft Woodwork school enterprise aims to provide **affordable products**, ensuring accessibility for the community while addressing economic constraints.

The original aim underlying the creation of a school enterprise was the provision of furniture at accessible prices for public schools, universities and offices to give support in facing economic challenges.

While the production scope has broadened beyond school and office furniture, the core focus remains on delivering high-quality products at affordable prices, ensuring minimal impact on more vulnerable customers.

[Affordable specialised training courses open to the community](#)

The school-enterprise programme significantly broadened its scope beyond benefitting its students by establishing itself as a recognized hub within the entire community. In addition to **delivering quality products at accessible prices**, Art & Craft Woodwork goes a step further by providing **access to affordable and specialized training courses open to the community**. These courses are designed to offer professional and qualified training to interested individuals. Through strategic collaborations with the municipality and a local religious entity, they actively promote these courses, aiming to reach and empower those who can benefit most from these valuable opportunities.

FUTURE SCENARIO

The **Arts & Craft Woodwork** school enterprise is actively shaping its future trajectory with a dual focus on continued furniture production as well as exploring also more creative outlets such as smaller, artisanal items like acrylic boxes, wooden spoons, and jewellery boxes.

The school enterprise is now operational and has already secured requests for realising projects in the woodworking lab. The success of the project, as indicated by the production requests, coupled with the strong motivation of those implementing it, is expected to make a significant impact on the local community.

Moreover, the positive outcomes from the piloting phase of the SEE Change-SJIP school-enterprise pilots have led to a remarkable success, namely the **signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Lebanese Ministry of Education to scale the school-enterprise model to other VTIs in Lebanon**. This is a promising sign for enhanced further development of similar initiatives. The scalability of this model can amplify the positive effects generated by this kind of initiative throughout Lebanon.

ANNEX 7 – ARCO EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team was composed by 6 researchers, rigorously selected on the basis of their past professional experience and the added value they will bring to the evaluation process. An Arabic-speaking consultant also supported the evaluation data collection activities when the English language couldn't be used. The table hereafter resumes the researchers' short biography and their role in the evaluations.

NAME	SHORT BIO	ROLE IN THE EVALUATION
<p>Enrico Testi (Ph.D)</p> <p>Social Economy senior expert</p>	<p>Enrico begun serving as the executive director of ARCO in 2009. Since then, under his leadership the research team grew from 2 to 26 people, working in 37 countries on more than 300 projects. He is recognized as a specialist in the fields of social enterprise and social innovation with a strong focus on these areas throughout his career. Enrico obtained his PhD in Economics and Management of Enterprises and Local Systems from the University of Florence in 2017. Notably, his Ph.D. thesis delved into the establishment of enabling ecosystems for social enterprises, demonstrating his deep knowledge and expertise in this domain. His research and practical work have allowed him to develop a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and challenges faced by social enterprises, as well as the importance of fostering supportive environments for their growth and sustainability. Indeed, he has contributed to the social enterprise academic literature with numerous peer-reviewed papers published in renowned scientific journals. Enrico has also been adjunct Professor of Social Economy and Sustainable Development at the University of Florence for several years. In 2011, Enrico also co-founded and became the manager of the Yunus Social Business Centre University of Florence, in partnership with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus. The centre has been successfully supporting social entrepreneurship projects in Italy and abroad ever since. With over a decade of experience, Enrico has provided first-hand scientific support to more than 40 projects focused on social enterprises in Italy and abroad.</p>	<p>Scientific coordinator</p> <p>Enrico supervises the entire project evaluation and ex-post assessment, providing scientific expertise and experience throughout all phases of the work. He oversees the methodology design, interpretation of findings, and formulation of final recommendations.</p>
<p>Camilla Guasti</p> <p>Social Economy expert</p>	<p>As researcher at ARCO's Social Economy Unit, Camilla specialises in social economy, social business, social innovation, and social impact assessment. She coordinates several international cooperation projects funded by the European Union and the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development, focusing on social economy, social enterprises, social innovation, and sustainable development. Camilla carries out studies and research on social economy and social innovation topics as well as training and capacity building on social business development and social entrepreneurship for profit, non-profit, and third sector organizations. She evaluates international cooperation projects focusing on social economy. Camilla holds a Master's degree in Economics and Development. A native speaker of both Italian and English, she makes valuable contributions to ARCO's numerous scientific studies, academic papers, and evaluation reports. Her bilingualism strengthens her ability to effectively communicate research and evaluation findings.</p>	<p>Team leader</p> <p>Camilla leads the project evaluation and ex-post assessments, overseeing the overall logistics and work phases. She carries out the data collection and analysis, both remotely and through fieldwork, assesses findings and elaborates recommendations. She developed the project final report and will also develop the ex-post evaluation report, as well as presenting the main findings.</p>
<p>Vittoria Vineis</p> <p>Social Economy expert/Data Analyst</p>	<p>Vittoria is a dedicated researcher with expertise in social economy, data analysis, and project evaluations. As member of ARCO's Social Economy Unit, she conducts research and studies, provides consultancy, and delivers capacity building and training on social economy and social business development. Vittoria also specializes in social impact assessments using qualitative and quantitative methods, including the Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology. She also has extensive experience evaluating international projects focusing on social entrepreneurship. Vittoria also works at the Yunus Social Business Centre, supporting social businesses and coordinating international cooperation projects focusing on social enterprises. She also conducted a political economy research project on "Enabling Ecosystem for Social Enterprise in Palestine". Vittoria holds a Master's degree in Economics and Development, and a Bachelor's degree in Development Economics and International Cooperation. She has recently obtained a Master's degree in Data Science and Statistical Learning, thus enhancing her expertise in data analysis and use of advanced programming languages and statistical software.</p>	<p>Project evaluator, Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analyst</p> <p>Vittoria contributes to developing the final and ex-post evaluations methodology and tools, as well as data analysis.</p>
<p>Eleonora Colozza</p> <p>Social Economy junior expert</p>	<p>Eleonora works as Research Assistant in ARCO's social economy unit, where she actively supports projects and research related to social economy and social business. She assists in project evaluations and social impact assessment, particularly utilizing the SROI methodology. She has experience in planning, management, and financial reporting for national and international research projects. Eleonora holds a bachelor's degree in Economic Development, International Cooperation, and Conflict Management from the School of Economics and a master's degree in International Relations and European Studies from the School of Political Science, both at the University of Florence.</p>	<p>Assistant project evaluator</p> <p>Eleonora provides valuable support to the project final and ex-post evaluations. She assists with data collection and analysis, both remotely and through fieldwork. Eleonora also contributes to the development of the project final and ex-post evaluation reports as well as</p>

NAME	SHORT BIO	ROLE IN THE EVALUATION
<p>Caterina Arciprete (Ph.D.)</p> <p>Senior researcher and gender & youth expert</p>	<p>Caterina holds a PhD in Development Economics from the University of Florence and has been a visiting scholar at the Young Lives Research Centre at the University of Oxford. Her main research interests are in inclusive development, vulnerability, childhood and multidimensional well-being, disability, gender and child poverty in all its forms. She combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Since 2015 she has been coordinator of the Children and Youth group of the Human Development Capability Association. In 2017, she led a consultancy for UNICEF-IRC to support the production of a "special issue" on multidimensional child poverty, and in 2021 a consultancy with UNICEF Madagascar. Since 2018, Caterina has been Responsible for introducing gender mainstreaming in the capacity building program of local authorities implemented by UNDP and the Ministry of Interior of Algeria. She repeatedly worked on and evaluated projects and programmes as gender expert. Among her key qualifications, she has been project manager of EU funded program, with recognized skills as effective teamwork leader and coordinator with enhanced intercultural respect. In 2022 she has been appointed as feminist economist by the Journal Feminist Economics.</p>	<p>supports the presentation of main findings.</p> <p>Gender supervisor Contributing to developing the methodology and qualitative data collection tools, Caterina actively enhances inclusivity and incorporates a gender lens. She applies a feminist research approach to the final and ex-post evaluations, ensuring that findings encompass considerations of disability, children, youth, and GBV when analysing and reporting data.</p>
<p>Tommaso Iannelli</p> <p>Monitoring & Evaluation Expert</p>	<p>Tommaso is M&E specialist in ARCO's M&E and Impact Evaluation Unit. His field of expertise is the Monitoring and Evaluation process of development projects and the data collection, management and analysis. His experience in ARCO boasts of the involvement with important organizations and donors, including SOS Children's Village International and AICS, and the implementation of different evaluation tasks, such as qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, tools design, desk analysis of documents and literature.</p> <p>He worked as data analyst for International NGOs such as ActionAid, as well as database officer working on the guidelines of Oxfam International.</p>	<p>Evaluation supervisor, Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analyst Tommaso assumes responsibility of validating the final and ex-post evaluations methodologies and tools, overseeing the data analysis process, including the triangulation of data and information.</p>
<p>Jawad Moussa</p> <p>Professional interpreter</p>	<p>Jawad is a highly skilled language professional, holding a Master's degree in Conference Interpretation from the Université Saint Joseph de Beyrouth. Graduating as Class Valedictorian, he specializes in simultaneous and consecutive interpretation, excelling in English and Arabic. As a Professional Interpreter at "Wordhyve" Agency, he has contributed to conferences with notable clients such as the Samir Kassir Foundation, UNDP, OXFAM, and AUB. Jawad's commitment extends to humanitarian efforts, providing interpretation for UNHCR and volunteering for UNRWA.</p>	<p>Arabic-speaking interpreter: Jawad provides valuable linguistic support to the team in data collection activities.</p>

Source: ARCO



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