



TRANSFORMING LIVES STORIES

Lebanese NGO Improves Livelihoods for Farmers in Baalbek-Hermel

USAID/CSP Supports Cooperation Without Borders' Nursery to Produce Seedlings to Benefit Hundreds of Local Farmers



The USAID/CSP-expanded seedlings nursery at CWB – September 2022.

“Now that I am able to purchase higher quality seedlings for a lower cost, I have been able to resume production whilst saving around 40% in production costs,”

**Masour al Khoury,
local farmer from
Baalbek Hermel.**

Home to around 130,000 residents, of which 55,000 are refugees, the Baalbek Hermel Governorate in the Beqaa relies heavily on agricultural production and is considered one of the poorest in Lebanon. Skyrocketing inflation amidst the country's ongoing socio-economic crisis has placed increasing strain on local farmers as they struggle to purchase crop seedlings, which has resulted in diminished incomes and growing intercommunal tensions over limited resources.

To address this issue and to improve the agricultural sector in the area, Cooperation Without Borders (CWB), a non-profit organization is providing organic vegetable and aromatic seedlings to local farmers. Since the start of its operations in 2019, CWB produced 4 million seedlings in 2020, which increased to 10 million in 2021. “Even though we grew very quickly, the demand from the farmers was still overwhelmingly high, and we didn't have the capacity to provide for them all,” stated Ola Mehyiddin, Agricultural Manager at CWB. Indeed, there is no organization nor company which provides a similar service in the area; farmers are forced to travel to South Lebanon, which not only incurs higher transportation costs, but also risks damaging the plants during the lengthy transit.

In response, USAID's Community Support Program (CSP) has expanded the capacities of CWB's seedling production nursery by providing it with 1,867m² of greenhouses and a climate-controlled germination room to increase production of high-quality, low-cost seedlings for underserved farmers. Fully operational by September 2022, the expanded nursery had enabled CWB to produce around 2.32 million additional seedlings by December 2022 to reduce production costs by an average of 40% for over 120 farmers. Overall, 175 hectares of land have been planted through the CSP-provided nursery.

In parallel, through CSP, USAID is also providing a solar farm to sustain the greenhouses' heating and cooling systems, which is expected to be completed by the early summer of 2023. “Given the current energy crisis in Lebanon, solar energy is crucial for our project to provide optimum growing conditions so that we can sustain and extend our production and impact,” stated Ola. “The solar farm provided by USAID/CSP will therefore enable CWB to reach many more farmers in the area.”