



USAID | LEBANON

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TRANSFORMING LIVES STORIES

Despite Ongoing Energy Crisis in Lebanon, Village of Deir el Ghazal is Powered Back to Life

USAID Provided Generator Enhances Residents' Access to Electricity, Streetlighting, and Water



Deir el Ghazal residents and members of the municipality in front of the USAID-provided generator

“Thanks to this intervention by USAID’s CSP, we are able to provide electricity and bring Deir el Ghazal to life again.”

Rafik Debs, Mayor of Deir el Ghazal

The village of Deir el Ghazal in the Beqaa Valley is home to around 1,000 Lebanese residents and 550 refugees who, amidst the ongoing socio-economic crisis, lost significant access to basic services such as household electricity and public streetlighting. Suffering from lengthy power outages, the town relied on a municipality-owned generator for backup electricity which had exceeded its lifespan, broke down frequently, and required increasingly unaffordable repair and maintenance. “Before the crisis, Deir el Ghazal was a well-equipped town, complete with wide-ranging services and facilities,” stated Mr Rafik Debs, Mayor of Deir el Ghazal. “But as the situation worsened, the community lost access to these, since the municipal generator was dysfunctional and too costly to operate.” In fact, the cost of repairing the old generator stood at around \$8,000 annually, while its regular maintenance would cost the municipality up to \$10,600 each month. “We tried exploring every option to find a solution to the electricity issue, but given the devaluation of the national currency, purchasing a new generator remained firmly out of reach, and we were slowly forced to reduce the service to the bare minimum of just two hours per day,” said Mr Debs.

As access to electricity declined, so did the town’s security situation. “Without electricity, the town plunged into darkness, and we could no longer power the security cameras,” said Georges Abu Faisal, local police officer in Deir el Ghazal. “We noticed a sharp rise in thefts and opportunistic crime, and the growing sense of insecurity in this usually quiet town fuelled growing intercommunal tensions,” he continued. Beyond this, residents also lost access to other services which relied on electricity to function, such as the provision of household water and the treatment of wastewater.

In response, USAID’s Community Support Program (CSP) provided and installed a new 400KVA generator to enable the municipality to power streetlights, household electricity, and other essential services to the community. “Following the installation of the generator by USAID’s CSP, the streetlights became functional once more, as well as the security cameras,” stated Mr Abu Faisal, “Our town is peaceful again and the community feels much safer.” Despite the ongoing devaluation of the national currency, financial support from the diaspora and cuts in operational costs are enabling the municipality to source fuel for the generator and provide continuous power to the community. “Thanks to the new generator, the municipality is realizing important savings in repair and maintenance, and is able to cover the cost of fuel to run it,” stated Michel, member of the municipal council responsible for the upkeep of the generator.

In turn, these cost savings have trickled down to benefit the town’s most vulnerable residents: “We are aware that within the current context, not everyone is able to afford the subscription fees; so, the municipality subsidizes the cost to support the least fortunate in the community and ensure their access to electricity,” stated Mr Debs.