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Annual Activity Report

20
25

جبال
Jibal
environmental
& social justice

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ACL

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We started working on

energy justice

through the CA

We published

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under land stories, Olive, Zaatar, and Aubergine

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We published the

Social Groceries Manual

We hosted

film screening

events

In **2025**, in numbers in a nutshell:

- ▶ 11 farmers have been certified through PGS
- ▶ ACL was launched and its advocacy committee established
- ▶ We started working on energy justice through the CA
- ▶ We published the Social Groceries Manual
- ▶ We published 3 new stories under land stories, Olive, Zaatar, and Aubergine
- ▶ We hosted film screening events

Under its mission to advance social and environmental justice, Jibal continued focusing its efforts on food sovereignty, and expanded its reach to energy justice in 2025. The year was marked by the public launch of the

Agroecology Coalition in Lebanon (ACL) in Beirut after 3 years of internal preparations. Several papers and stories were published, sharing knowledge and narratives from the land.

Additionally, after the ceasefire declaration, support to the community kitchens and central kitchens that had been established to mitigate the crisis created by the Israeli aggression in 2024 continued. Jibal launched a crowdfund to support soil bioremediation efforts in the south. This report showcases the organization's diverse interventions, along with its partners and collaborators, that contribute to the strengthening of local communities and systems.



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A.

Agroecology as a Practice: From Producing to Selling

1. Farmers Transition to Agroecology

15

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+

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4

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Our work on farmers' transitioning to agroecology changed from supporting a huge number of farmers (**120**) in **2021** to focusing on **15 farmers** starting **2023**.

Those **15 farmers'** lands are 'lighthouse farms' serving as model farmers, spreading practices and approaches into their local contexts.

We changed our approach based on research and practice targeting directly the factors that make transitions possible.

2025 has marked the end of this coaching cycle. After **2 to 3 years** of personalised coaching, training and in-kind support, the **15 farmers** have reached different levels of agroecology. **11** have transitioned fully and have enhanced their soil health and productivity, **4** have transitioned up to **80%** to agroecology.

› Some highlights of the year:



ANTONIO AND SYBELLE DOUEIHY

are two siblings who run a sheep and cow farm in Zgharta, North Lebanon. They also produce some seasonal vegetables and make diverse cheeses from their animals. In two years they fully transitioned into agroecology.

› Here are a few highlights of their practices:

- Production of liquid fertilizers
- Installation of a biogas system
- Increase in vegetable production
- Creation of a learning environment and spreading knowledge to multiple farmers



JIHAD OSTA AND MICHEL ATWI

are two farmers from Maghdouche, South Lebanon. Michel runs an orchard and a compost facility. Similarly, Jihad runs an orchard and a vermicompost facility.

› Here are a few highlights of their practices:

- Introduction of new machinery to increase productivity and efficiency in compost production
- Designing, planting, and processing cover crops for both farmers
- Introduction of new pruning techniques
- Market access

As part of our continuous learnings, internal evaluations and research, we've concluded a list of priorities for the next years when it comes to supporting farmers transitioning.

› Expanding the lighthouse farm model through peer-to-peer learning:

These model farms serve as training hubs where peer-to-peer exchange transforms supported farmers into mentors. This creates a ripple effect of agroecological knowledge and community-led innovation.

› **Integrate PGS promotion into Farmer Field School activities:** so that participating farmers learn about the certification system and can join it, gaining access to new and more sustainable markets.

› **Start organizing or co-organizing regional exchanges:** with farmers, activists, and individuals working on food sovereignty and agroecology to increase knowledge exchange across borders, build on each other's experiences, and strengthen a sense of community and unity within the region.

2. Bioremediation: Supporting the Regeneration of Polluted Soil in the South of Lebanon

For decades, South Lebanon has been on the frontlines of war and occupation, with repeated attacks targeting not only people and infrastructure but also land and ecosystems. The latest Israeli aggression (October 8, 2023 – present) has killed over 4,000 people¹, transformed villages, farmlands, olive groves, and forests into devastated landscapes. Beyond the visible destruction, soil in border areas has been contaminated with heavy metals, toxic compounds, and organic pollutants, posing serious risks to food systems, water sources, and public health.

1. <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-crisis-situation-analysis-221225-281225>

Within this context, Jibal has been supporting agronomist and agroecology practitioner Hadi Awada in launching a grassroots bioremediation initiative (a soil amendments facility) in Burj el Muluk and surrounding areas of South Lebanon. The facility will produce biologically complete compost (BioComplete) using locally sourced inputs and inoculated with living soil organisms from South Lebanon, ensuring that regeneration relies on locally adapted microbial and fungal life. In parallel, the facility will produce biochar to help bind heavy metals, improve soil structure, and enhance long-

term carbon sequestration. Throughout 2025, and despite ongoing aggression, Hadi's work continued through the soil assessments research, soil structure examination, collection of soil samples, and the identification of local species with bioremediation potential.

In 2026, the project will focus on refining the BioComplete compost, testing it on the same plots where soil samples were collected, and scaling up production. The amended soils will be monitored to assess changes in biological activity and soil health over time.



3. The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)

Since 2023, Jibal has been working on the development of a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) in Lebanon. A PGS is a community-led, trust-based certification system that brings together farmers, consumers, and experts to collectively support and recognize agroecological practices, as an alternative to costly and top-down certification models. During 2025, several key milestones were reached:

- **15 farms** participated in peer-to-peer review visits
- **1 public gathering** was organized to present the PGS

and invite new members into the initiative

- **10+ working sessions** were held with reviewers and experts to refine agroecology criteria and certification processes
- **1 certifying committee meeting** tested consensus-based certification decision-making and agreed on which level of certificate to allocate to the 15 farms visited.

- **12+ core team working sessions** brought together volunteering members to work on shaping the brand & vision of the initiative.

While the first two years focused on piloting and testing the PGS model, 2025 marked a shift. The system demonstrated the essential role it plays within the agroecology community, particularly in filling gaps related to farmer support, peer learning, and trust-building along the agroecological transition.

Today, a growing community of **farmers, consumers, food activists, and experts** is actively involved. Through a participatory process, the initiative was named **SILA (Standard in Local Agroecology)**. The community has since co-developed a living form for reviewing agroecology practices and criteria, certification pathways (in transition / reference farm), governance structures, and the first elements of SILA's public identity,

including the logo, certificate¹⁹ seal, vision and other communication tools.

Quote from Jacques Safi, active member of SILA (a consumer):

"I see the PGS becoming a strong and trusted reference for quality, especially ethics, and authenticity in our Lebanon. In 3 to 5 years, I hope it will expand to cover a lot more producers across the country, become more accessible, and gain national recognition that supports local agriculture."

The work on the PGS will continue during the next 2 years: 2026 and 2027, and will lead to the implementation an independent group and entity with its own governance system.



4. Social and Solidarity Economy

Working toward an economy that enables local products to reach end consumers while supporting agroecological producers is central to building food sovereignty and collective resilience. Jibal's work on the Social and Solidarity Economy promotes alternatives to extractive market systems by strengthening short supply chains, solidarity-based distribution models, and fair access to food. This holistic approach links producers and consumers through structures that prioritize social justice,

ecological sustainability, and community wellbeing over profit maximization. In 2025, Jibal finalized and published the Social Groceries Manual, a practical tool designed to support initiatives that combine affordable access to food with fair market opportunities for small-scale farmers. The manual is now available in both printed and digital formats on Jibal's website. Its publication was accompanied by two public events hosted in social groceries; Dikken el Mazraa in Beirut and Dekenet

al Nes in Chouf; creating spaces for exchange between producers, organizers, and consumers. In parallel, Jibal delivered a presentation to Master's students at the American University of Beirut (AUB), introducing the manual, the principles of Social and Solidarity Economy, and sharing lessons from on-the-ground implementation, contributing to the dissemination and future replication of solidarity-based food systems in Lebanon.





B.

Organising and Advocating



1. The Agroecology Coalition in Lebanon (ACL)

2025 was an important year for the ACL. After more than 3 years of internal preparation, the Agroecology Coalition in Lebanon was officially launched in Beirut Metropolis, on the 22nd of November, coinciding with Lebanon's independence day, and overlooking the remains of the Beirut Port explosion. The event gathered over 150 activists, grassroots initiatives, and farmers, under the umbrella of Collaboration

for agroecology, surrounded by agroecology publications, seedlings, heirloom seeds, and produce. Several members of ACL spoke at the event, highlighting the coalition's goals and vision of achieving food sovereignty through agroecology, and the advocacy work, collective efforts, and community building required to achieve this vision.

ACL is the first national coalition for agroecology in the Arab world, and the level of advocacy work that it has been conducting in

collaboration with its partners such as Agrimovement and Legal Agenda (who wrote an [article](#) on the launch), is the first of its level in food sovereignty advocacy in the country.

The time has come for us to view food, health, the environment, and a dignified life as rights for all people, not just some, and not as commodities for sale!

This is a vision, and a battle that we are not fighting alone. We are part of a broad local, regional and global movement

that includes the struggles of farmers, peasants, and entire nations, all clearly demanding their right to food sovereignty.

The Agroecology Coalition Lebanon is a collaboration of groups and individuals aiming to establish an alternative food and agricultural system, proposing agroecology as an alternative that enables communities to achieve food sovereignty by managing their resources to build a food system that is socially, economically, and environmentally just for all.

2. Advocacy Work

Jibal's advocacy work was strengthened in 2025. The work focused mainly on several advocacy campaigns: **1)** to push for the implementation of local food strategies in Lebanon, **2)** against the Seed Law draft, **3)** for a less economic and more justice and sovereignty approach in the National Agriculture Strategy.

› Local food strategies Film Screening

As part of our efforts to engage youth in our advocacy work and to center the role of consumers, we organized a screening event of the Territorial Food Strategies



video. We invited the coalition of secular student clubs in Lebanon to attend and participate in a panel discussion that followed the screening.

The discussion gave the floor to those who contributed to developing the strategy, as well as to farmers, allowing participants to share their experiences and perspectives directly. Students had the opportunity to ask questions, engage in dialogue with farmers, and better understand the realities of local food systems. The event aimed to build meaningful connections while exploring potential solutions and highlighting the important

role youth can play, not only as active advocates but also as conscious consumers within the food system.

► **The Seed law and Management of Plant Genetic Resources law:**

The proposed draft laws pose risks to our seed sovereignty, and hence our food sovereignty. The seed law, if passed, would serve the interests of private companies rather than addressing the urgent needs of the farmers, local communities, and the environment. It criminalizes traditional farming practices like selling heirloom seeds that have preserved biodiversity for thousands of years. This law treats seeds,

our source of food and life, as mere commodities, ignoring their social, rights-based, and developmental dimensions. In this way, it becomes a tool for "green grabbing" life-sustaining resources under slogans of "improving quality and increasing production," it threatens our seed heritage, placing farmers at the mercy of large corporations that control the market and prices. This strips away their autonomy and freedom to manage their resources, threatening their livelihoods and our resilience in the face of a changing climate.

The advocacy campaign included communication with multiple partners and

decision makers, a social media campaign and multiple published [articles](#) like the one published by Legal Agenda, which were followed by an invitation from the ministry of agriculture to participate in meetings to discuss the law.

The plant genetic resource law risks transforming seeds and their genetic material from a Common owned and managed by people, to a property owned by the state, a first step in the direction towards privatization. The advocacy work will continue, meetings with the ministry, coordination among groups, with the press, and with producers, will all continue, aiming to result in

the withdrawal of drafts that jeopardize our sovereignty, and drafting new ones that preserve and expand it.

› National Agriculture

Strategy: Instead of centering small scale producers, tackling problems like import, smuggling, the needed reform of the whole sale market, and the impact of israeli aggressions, the national strategy operates on a “if everything goes well” basis, it lack a focus on localization and resilience creating advantages for agribusinesses over small scale producers. It failed to include farmers in the decision making process, instead, farmers were referred to as “beneficiaries” instead

of creating a true partnership with our producers.

The Agroecology Coalition took part in an online meeting followed by an in person workshop where its members shared their feedback, however, the changes needed are ones that require a complete reshuffling of priorities which is a challenge and a recurrent theme.

However, the coalition will issue press releases making clear its objections and the reasoning behind them, and keep working on next steps advocating for a food sovereignty approach to the national strategy.



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3. Farmers Organizing

Collective organising is very important when it comes to environmental and social justice. It is the act of gathering, pooling resources together, articulating collective needs, advocating for rights and laws that makes things move on a collective level towards a more equitable system. In the case of food sovereignty it is the same. We cannot work towards a more sovereign and just food system without organising ourselves, without collaborating and reflecting collectively, and that on

different levels: organisations, activists, experts, but also and most importantly farmers and practitioners. Without a movement of farmers advocating for their own rights and taking ownership of this topic, food sovereignty will be at a farther reach.

For the past few years, Jibal has been reflecting and working on the topic of organising through different forms. First ACL, then supporting the revival of a cooperative in Majdal Meouch, then through PGS, and finally more informally creating links between

agroecology farmers in the country through knowledge exchange and dialogues. The need to support a more grassroots farmer-led movement has always been present, but somehow hard to reach.

After all these experiences, we felt the need to take a step back and understand the context of organising by dedicating some time for research and reflection. From the various recommendations that came out from this work, we can cite: the importance of direct farmer involvement by strengthening continuous

ties between farmers, unions, and allied coalitions, and grounding advocacy in farmers' lived realities. This should be supported through organising trainings, participatory research on farmer mobilisation (including agroecology, gender, and regional experiences), and the use of popular education tools. Finally, connecting youth to agricultural struggles and rethinking cooperatives and unions through innovative narratives and exchanges can help renew and sustain organising efforts.



C.

Changing Narratives

Land Stories

Land Stories is a storytelling initiative that highlights the lives of farmers and the crops they grow - ranging from wheat and apples to citrus and aubergines - on lands that have played a historic role in the origins of agriculture. In 2025, an additional story was produced: **"Zaatar near the border"**. This story focuses on farmers working in the South in the areas that were, and are still, being bombed.

A bilingual website **"[Land-stories.org](https://landstories.org)"** was developed to house the full collection of 10 stories, and a thoughtfully designed print publication was produced, offering a more personal and tactile way to engage with the stories.



Photo Credits: Jenny Gustafsson



Photo Credits: Jenny Gustafsson



Photo Credits: Jenny Gustafsson

Also, several stories were translated and published in international outlets:

› **“Olives in the South”** was translated to Spanish and published in September 2025 by Amwaj Alliance.

[Find it here.](#)

› **“Zaatar near the border”** was published in November 2025 by Everything is Political as a digital and physical issue.

[Find it here.](#)

› **“Aubergine in the Bekaa”** was translated to Italian and published in November 2025 by Arab Pop as part of their magazine.

Overall, the website has recorded 3.5K new users with 3.5K active users as of

2024. The nearly 1:1 ratio between active and new users indicates that Land Stories is consistently attracting new audiences rather than relying on a small base of repeat visitors. Beyond the website, social media and editorial collaborations have substantially expanded the reach of Land Stories, showing that the project resonates across platforms and diverse audiences. Translations and partnerships have been especially effective. For example, the collaboration with [Makaani Magazine](#) on the zaatar story generated exceptionally high visibility, reaching tens of thousands of views and thousands of interactions on Instagram alone.

In addition to digital reach, we have organised 3 events throughout the year to launch the publication and facilitate discussions around agroecology and stories of the land.

● **1ST EVENT:** In Beirut, a three-day immersive and interactive installation on Land Stories, to launch the publication and facilitate a discussion on agroecology and food sovereignty with all of the farmers from the articles.

● **2ND EVENT:** in Hammana, an evening of storytelling with Maysoun, one of the land tenders from the Land Stories series, decentralised from Beirut to the mountains for people to interact with

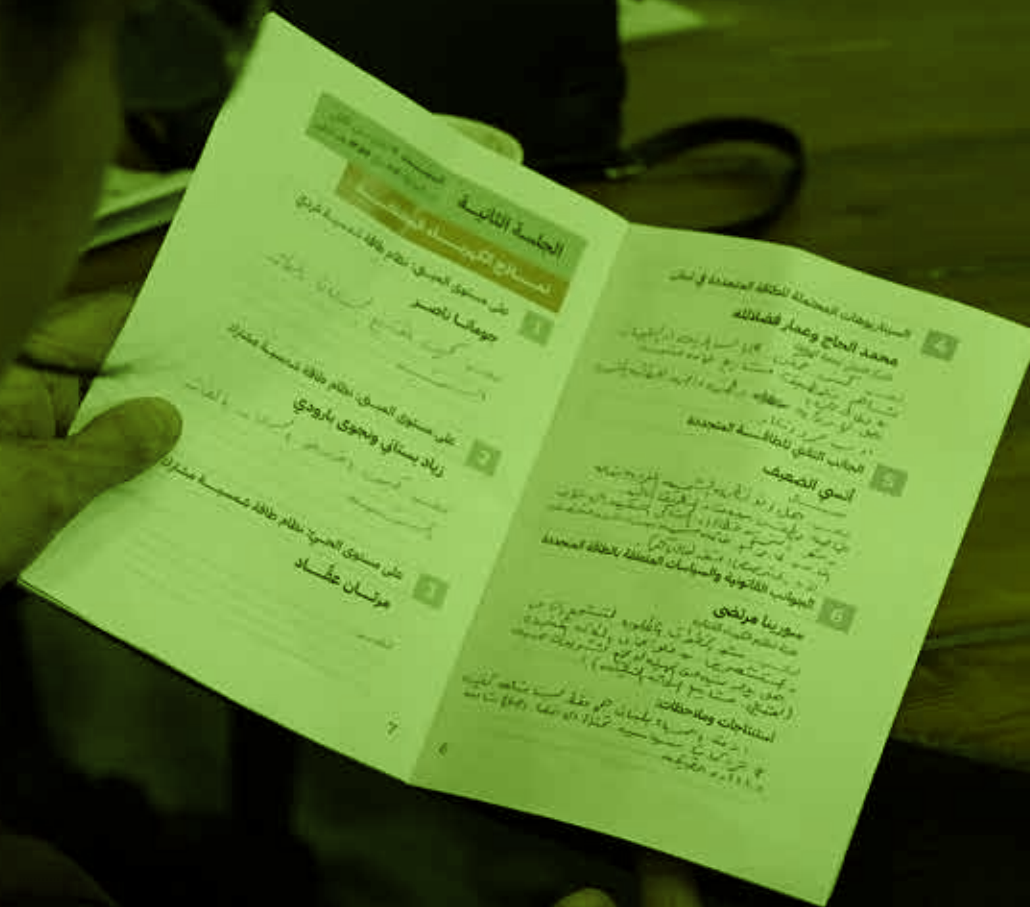
their understanding of food sovereignty in their region.

● **3RD EVENT:** in collaboration with ASIL (Anthropology Society in Lebanon), and with one of the land tenders from the Olive story, Yasmina from Basatin Baanoub, reaching different audience like researchers, anthropologists, ethnographers from all over the world.

Together, these results demonstrate that Land Stories operates not merely as a static website, but as a dynamic cultural platform. Through partnerships, translations, and event-based storytelling, it multiplies its impact well beyond direct web traffic.



Photo Credits: Jenny Gustafsson



D.

Energy Justice

Energy Justice

Energy justice is the principle that energy systems should be fair and inclusive, ensuring everyone has access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy, while the social, economic, and environmental costs and benefits are shared equitably—especially for marginalized communities.

In 2025, Jibal implemented a Citizen Assembly (CA) on Energy Justice in the neighborhood of Hamra, Beirut, Lebanon, in collaboration with the University College of London (UCL). A CA is a participatory democratic process in which a diverse group of ordinary people, usually selected by sortition (random selection), come together

to learn about an issue, deliberate collectively, and develop recommendations or decisions aimed at the common good. The CA on electricity in Hamra brought together 35 participants who discussed over the span of three days the following question: How can we organise collectively to lower the cost, pollution, and mental burden of electricity on us?

Several recommendations came out, and those are being presented to the different stakeholders and policy makers concerned. Here is a preliminary report with more details on the process, recommendations, and key outcomes: <https://www.jibal.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/CITIZEN-ASSEMBLY-FINAL.pdf>



Photo Credits: Hussein Bassal

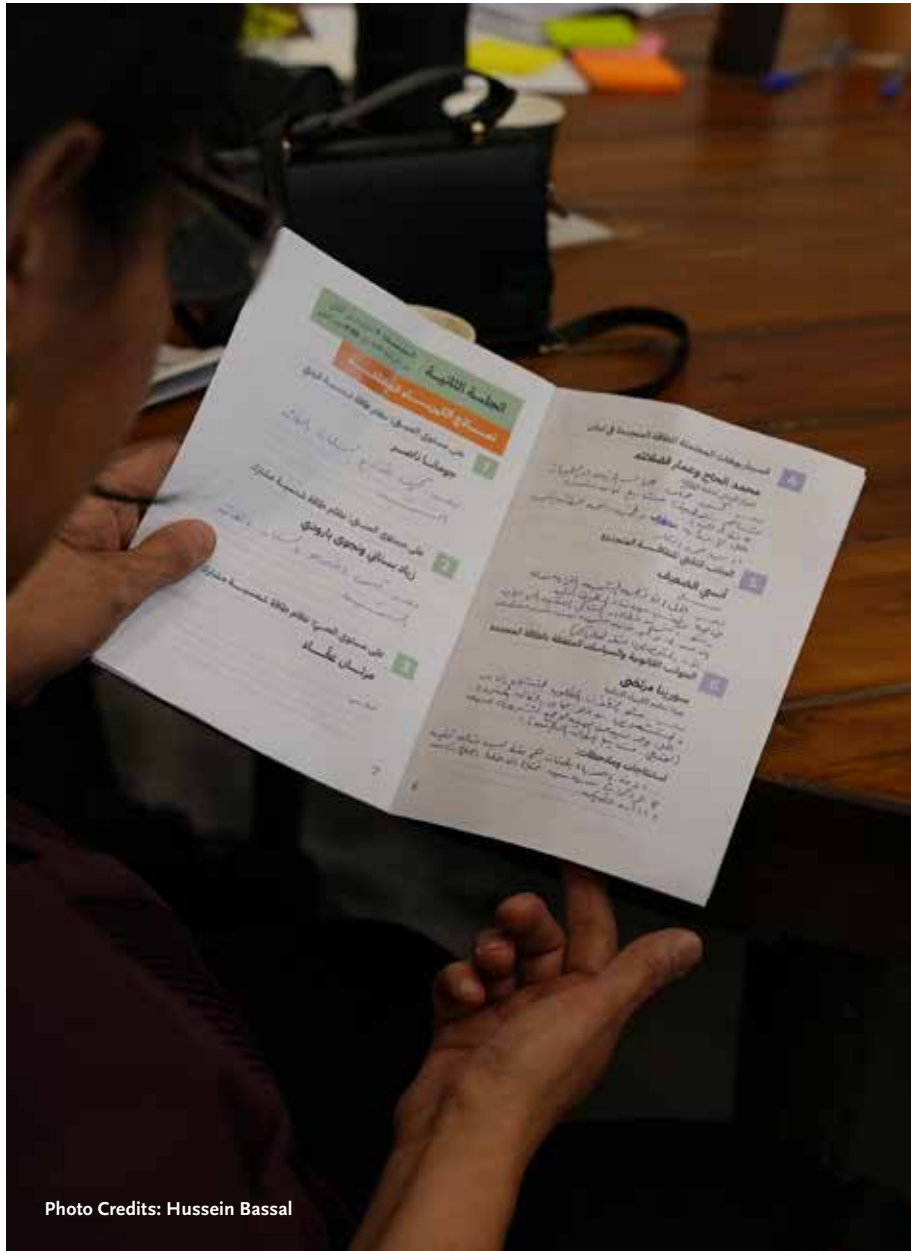


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E.

Jibal's Solidarity Fund

Jibal's Solidarity Fund



Lebanon is facing one of its most difficult periods yet. After years of economic collapse (since 2019), the 2020 Beirut blast, and the ongoing Israeli aggression since October 2023, which escalated again in March 2026, the challenges we face are immense. In the South and the Bekaa regions, villages have been bombarded heavily, with some completely demolished, the environment devastated, and hundreds of thousands displaced with no homes to return to. At Jibal, we believe that a just recovery goes beyond rebuilding homes—it must also restore the land, support the farmers, and ensure access to healthy food. Since 2017, we've been working at the intersection of food sovereignty and alternative education, helping communities build resilience.

But today, we are struggling to keep going.

Through this solidarity fund that started in 2024, we aim to link local farmers with central kitchens distributing daily meals to displaced communities, purchase fresh produce from local farmers and provide additional food supplies and kitchen essentials for both central and community kitchens, support the establishment of community kitchens in shelters, share our Community Kitchen Guidelines developed in 2024, and document the impact of the war on local food systems and how different initiatives are mobilizing in solidarity. Donations can be made through several links and channels that are available on our [website](#).

Partners and Funders

MAIN PARTNERS



Step Together
Since 2024



Mada NGO
Since 2020



Buzuruna Juzuruna
Since 2017



Dikken El Mazraa
Since 2021



Eedama
Since 2017



Zaher Grow To Learn
Since 2019



Alternative Tour Beirut
Since 2018



Nation Station

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Since 2020

