



2021 - 2022

# Activity Report

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jibal



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# Our Story & Mission

## Our Story

In 2017, Ounsi El Daif and Angela Saade returned to Lebanon after many years of living abroad.

They both made the following observation: environmental topics are often approached through a very technical perspective that hides the more complex social and structural inequalities that underlie these realities.

Angela Saade, double Master in Engineering and Anthropology, had worked for many years in the renewable energy sector in France. She also founded the French NGO Tabadol for intercultural understanding and fighting discrimination.

Ounsi El Daif, PhD in Physics, founded Eedama Advisors, a UAE-based social enterprise promoting sustainability through training sessions on impact entrepreneurship and technical sustainability as well as awareness in the Gulf region and Lebanon.

It is at the intersection of social and environmental justice that Jibal was born. In 2017, JIBAL as a Lebanese not-for-profit association was founded.

## Our Mission

We promote and advance

## environmental & social justice

or the fair and equitable distribution of environmental and social benefits and burdens – in Lebanon through the furtherment of collective organization, accessible and open knowledge, and regenerative principles. We believe that a harmonious world entails the fair sharing of the environment and natural resources, on the one hand, and the recognition of reciprocal relations of equality and the redistribution of wealth, on the other.



# Highlights of 2021 & 2022

photo by Jenny Gustafsson

Readers appreciate  
valuable information

120

Farmers Trained &  
Coached to Switch to  
Sustainable Agriculture

3

Publications  
were Released

1

Meeting for the  
Agroecology Coalition



1

Farmers' Market "Souk El Mawsam" opened in Geitawi

3

Input providers of compost and natural pesticides were supported in their growth

1

Learning Garden was founded

# Shifting to Sustainable Agriculture

Input providers are a main reference of recommendations and advice for farmers in Lebanon, even though their opinions may hold some bias as it might be in their interest to sell pesticides and chemical fertilizers. As a consequence, the sector in Lebanon suffers from poor land and soil management, showing some of the highest per-hectare use of fertilizers and pesticides in the world. In 2021, Jibal team members started thinking about interventions that would allow farmers to transition into Agroecology.

In Jibal's work, the terms Sustainable Agriculture and Agroecology are sometimes used interchangeably even though sustainable agriculture is a broader term, they still both share the common goal of promoting ecologically sound and socially just farming practices.

164

coaching sessions

25

technical agricultural training sessions

120

farmers in Mount Lebanon and Bekaa

## Training

Jibal has organized **at least 25 technical agricultural training sessions for approximately 120 farmers in 2021 and 2022 in several areas in Mount Lebanon and Bekaa.**

The training covered different topics including:

- soil preparation
- weeding
- fertilization
- water management
- main pests and diseases in fruit trees orchards
- harvest and post-harvest
- home-made pesticides and fungicides
- introduction to agroecology
- companion plants
- composting

Other additional topics were addressed, including bookkeeping and financial management training sessions, and the establishment of farmers' cooperatives. Also, as part of knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer exchange visits to sustainable model farms and agricultural inputs providers were organized.

## Coaching

In addition to group training, 164 coaching sessions were delivered to approximately 120 farmers.

These sessions were taking place on each farmer's land and allowed them to ask specific questions and receive tailored guidance and recommendations.

## Input Providers Support

The spreading of agroecology practices requires access to sufficient amounts of locally produced sustainable inputs necessary for production. Those inputs include compost, seeds, seedlings, and organic pesticides.

During the two last years, Jibal worked with several input providers supplying them with needed tools, business advice, and technical knowledge where needed:

FARMER	LOCATION	IMPACT
Fares Zeidan	Maaser El Chouf	provided with a distiller needed to expand his production of natural pesticides
Tony Khalil	Majd El Meouch	provided with a shredder and 80 tons of manure to start his compost unit production
Varouj Bakalian	Bekaa	provided with greenhouses to increase his vermicompost production

## Research: Agroecology in Lebanon

Since 2019, the economic crisis in Lebanon has exposed issues in the conventional food system model driven by agroindustry. While some farmers have put a halt on their activities, the Jibal team's day-to-day experiences in the field have made it clear that others are being pushed into making their practice more sustainable as it often allows for the reduction of imported and capital-intensive production inputs. New actors appearing in the food and farming scene were also observed.

In many ways, the crisis was a key moment to reflect on what new paths can be taken. Ministries, funders, NGOs, and local authorities can play a major role in this process, where agroecology can serve as a guiding framework to rethink the Lebanese food system's failures.

Jibal conducted research aimed at understanding the direction of agroecological actors across Lebanon in hopes of supporting the growth of a Lebanese agroecology movement. This research produced the report "Agroecology in Lebanon - Analyzing the current scene and exploring upscaling potentials" that synthesizes its main findings.



# Alternative Access to Market

Aiming to transform the working conditions of the farmers, Jibal focuses on creating alternative economies or ways to access the market. Our work includes supporting food producers and consumers to create cooperatives and initiatives that include collective work. It also involves finding alternatives to the often unfair food chain where traders benefit the most economically.

## Farmer's Market Souk El Mawsam

In 2022, a farmers market was launched in Beirut, bringing together around 20 farmers from Mount Lebanon and Bekaa. Souk El Mawsam aimed at creating direct links between farmers and consumers. It opens twice a week and is located at Nation Station, in Geitawi.

On every market day, around 100 consumers visit the market to buy sustainable products. Several environmental educational activities also took place during the days of the market, involving children from the area.

## Solidarity Grocery Shop Dikken El Mazraa

Jibal has been supporting Dikken el Mazraa- a solidarity grocery shop located in Beirut which sources high-quality products from independent local producers and cooperatives. While maintaining such quality, they price their produced goods, based on the social and financial situation of the members. This allows vulnerable households to have access to quality food through a membership program.

Jibal has been providing Dikken el Mazraa support services that included [business model and strategy support, marketing and communication support, and fundraising and access to funding support.](#)

## Famer Owned Sales Cooperative

Selling big quantities of vegetables without going through the usual traders and middlemen requires thinking of a collective organization for farmers who would reach out to different market channels.

In 2022, Jibal started [organizing collective meetings with farmers involved in sustainable agriculture to think collectively of a cooperative model.](#) Training on cooperative governance and the presentation of other models were organized.

This work will continue in 2023.

## Research Exploring Alternative Food Initiatives in Lebanon

In Lebanon, the primary way for farmers to sell fresh produce is through the wholesale market system. Since this system is most of the time unregulated, unfair and non-transparent, several alternatives have been developed during the last decade that aim to directly link producers to consumers in a way or another.

From farmer's markets to grocery cooperatives and baskets, the report ["Exploring Alternative Food Initiatives in Lebanon"](#) published in 2021 studies these different options, to spread these models and learn more from their success and challenges.

# Territorial Food Strategies and Plans

It has become increasingly evident that current food systems are failing to provide good quality, nutritious, culturally relevant, and affordable diets that are accessible to everyone. From the way we produce our food to how we prioritize economic growth over the sustainable use of resources and meeting food security standards: it is [the combination of several factors related to each element of the food system value chain is driving biodiversity degradation and the rise of food insecurity worldwide.](#)

It is, therefore, essential to build a territorial food strategy that promotes cooperative, inclusive, and resilient food systems at the local level to provide quality diets in an economically fair and environmentally sustainable way, to achieve food security and sovereignty.

## Zgharta Region Food Strategy

The Jibal team worked on designing and implementing [the first pilot project of a territorial food strategy in the Zgharta region](#), intending to eventually replicate this type of intervention in other areas of Lebanon.

To begin with, [an assessment of the state of the current food system](#) in the caza was done, identifying amongst others the existing food actors and networks in the region.

After the assessment, [a series of consultations and meetings](#) took place

in the caza to gather feedback and mobilize interested parties, which contributed to the writing of the final strategy.

The meetings included NGOs, municipality members, inhabitants of the caza, and different professionals working in the food sector.

These consultations led to the [creation of an executive food sovereignty committee](#) with various stakeholders who will be implementing the territorial food strategy, as well as a steering committee that will include other important stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture amongst others.

## Research

# The Berdawni Valley - Feasibility Study for Shifting to Agroecology

A feasibility study was conducted by the Jibal team for the french organization APIEU aiming to understand the agriculture landscape and map all current and potential agroecology actors in Zahle and its surroundings.

The study is part of a preparation phase that would be followed by a multi-year project built on its recommendations to promote ecological farming practices in the area.

To begin with, a series of interviews were conducted with the main actors of the agriculture sector to assess the state of the current food system, by looking into the different elements of the value chain. Then, a workshop was organized with the support of the municipality of Zahlé to present to the actors of the territory the results of this feasibility study, to reflect on what would be the points of focus to promote agroecology in the territory and include their feedback in the study.



# Education



Education on environmental justice is crucial for creating a sustainable and equitable future for all.

**Environmental justice refers to the fair distribution of environmental burdens and benefits and ensuring that all individuals and communities have equal access to clean air, water, and other natural resources.**

Unfortunately, marginalized communities often face disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards, which can lead to negative health outcomes and other social injustices.

Jibal recognized the importance of environmental justice early on and made it one of the first activities the NGO started working on in 2018.

The organization delivered workshops in schools and organized field trips to help students understand the importance of environmental justice and its impact on society aiming to empower young people to become advocates for environmental justice and to engage in meaningful action to address environmental issues.

By providing education on environmental justice, Jibal sought to create a future generation that prioritizes environmental sustainability and social justice.

# 2

farms equipped with learning spaces

workshops for ages

# 7-14

# ToTs

for popular education on environmental

# 95

weekly workshops developed

## Supporting Learning Gardens

### GROW Lebanon

The aim of this project was to provide support for learning gardens in Lebanon.

To achieve this goal, two farms - Ghossoun Zgharta in the North and Buzuruna Juzuruna in the Bekaa - were equipped with learning spaces, tools, and materials required for holding educational activities, as well as separate irrigation systems for the activities plots.

The project included a total of 95 weekly workshops at the farms for children aged 7 to 14. The curriculum used for these workshops was developed by Jibal, published, and made publicly accessible.

The workshops focused on nature-based activities that aimed to enhance the children's understanding of the environment. The facilitators who worked with the children received training to equip them with the skills needed to enhance engagement, use tools of popular education for teaching environmental justice, and incorporate movement and theater into their pedagogical approach.

### Nation Station and GROW Beirut

The objective of this project was to provide training for the trainers and teachers of these 2 public spaces in Beirut to provide them with the tools and skills needed to effectively run nature-based activities for the neighborhood children and youth introducing concepts such as environmental justice.

The same methods used in the GROW Lebanon project mentioned above were also utilized here.

# Supporting Educational Institutions

## Chatila Children and Youth Center: Farasheh Project

The aim of this project was to [provide support for the Children and Youth Center at the Shatila camp](#).

To achieve this goal, the Jibal team [facilitated 16 training and coaching sessions](#) for the center's teachers. The sessions aimed to enable the teachers to create a [more engaging and dynamic learning environment](#) for their students, one that is both emotionally safe and intellectually stimulating. The teachers were also equipped with the skills they needed to facilitate nature-based activities in a garden that was developed as part of the project in [collaboration with Buzuruna Juzuruna](#).

In addition to the training and coaching sessions, repairs were completed on the roof of the center's school building. These repairs strengthened the building and provided a shaded roof that can also be used as an outdoor learning space.

## Malaak NGO in Akkar

The objective of this project was to [provide training for the teachers at Malaak educational center in Akkar](#).

The training focused on [enhancing children and youth engagement in activities](#), as well as on how to run nature-based activities for their students while introducing concepts such as environmental justice. The students attending classes at Malaak mostly [come from displaced families](#), and the children attend afternoon classes at government schools. To support these children's educational needs, the Jibal team facilitated two full days of training for the center's teachers.

During these sessions, a variety of interactive tools were used, including [role play, theater, drawing, storytelling, games, and reflections](#). All the tools used during these training sessions were provided as examples of what could later be utilized by the teachers themselves with their students.



# Environmental Justice Curriculum

Jibal started working on

**the 1st steps of a curriculum by developing 4 workshops, published and accessible to all in Arabic, French, and English, about four topics related to environmental justice: public spaces, water, waste, and food and agroecology.**

These workshops, combined with the various curricula developed to support learning gardens and educational centers, will constitute a comprehensive curriculum available across Lebanon and regionally.

In addition to the training and coaching sessions, repairs were completed on the roof of the center's school building. These repairs strengthened the building and provided a shaded roof that can also be used as an outdoor learning space.

## Research Assessment of Learning Gardens in Lebanon

Jibal conducted a **comprehensive study to assess the situation** of learning gardens in Lebanon, with a focus on identifying the challenges they face, their successes, motivations, and types of educational activities.

The goal of the study was to **find ways to better support these gardens and enhance their impact as well as foster more collaboration among the different actors** in the field by drawing a picture of their current state and identifying several key challenges that they face.

The study also identified many success stories among learning gardens in



Lebanon. Based on these findings, **Jibal developed recommendations to better support learning gardens in Lebanon.**

These recommendations include providing financial and institutional support, offering training and resources for garden management, and promoting collaboration among different actors in the field.

# Media

In recent years, one topic has figured perhaps more than any other in the media: migration. Stories about refugees, cross-border movement and human mobility have filled magazine and newspaper pages, directing our attention that way.

In many ways, it seems that our worlds are shaped more than ever before by the causes and effects of human migration. Lebanon is one of the top refugee-hosting countries in the world. The country is still home to more refugees per capita than any other country in the world. On the other hand, the country continues to be the home and destination of international journalists. The same is true for international and local NGOs working on refugees and migration.

## Trainings and Workshops

During the last two years, we have been [delivering workshops to journalists, researchers, and storytellers](#).

Switch Perspective gave participants an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences, to analyze and think about themselves in relation to society at large, and to locate their potential to generate change.

Several formats have been developed and implemented:

- a one-week residency for writing stories about a specific neighborhood
- a one-week training “the summer workshop” for storytellers from different places of the world, with speakers from Lebanon
- a two days training for local journalists and storytellers.

## Research New Routes to Narrating Migration

“[New routes to Narrating Migration](#)” is a publication that follows the storytelling process from beginning to end, step by step.

Each chapter looks at a certain step along the way, starting from asking things about the journalists or storytellers themselves to ending with the publication of the finalized story.

photo by Jenny Gustafsson



Assessment of Learning Gardens in Lebanon

Environmental Justice Workshops

Exploring Alternative Food Initiatives in Lebanon

New Routes to Narrating Migration

Environmental Justice in Lebanon

Agroecology from Past to Future



## Partners



## Funders



Onwards, towards  
environmental and social  
justice.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the collective effort that has propelled us forward on this journey and the invaluable contributions that have enabled us to make a meaningful impact in our commitment to environmental and social justice.

We remain committed to our mission and look forward to continuing our work together in the years to come.

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