

JIBAL.ORG

# Annual Activity Report

Photo Credit: Jenny Gustafsson

20  
23



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## 1. Our Mission

Jibal promotes social and environmental justice in Lebanon, striving for equitable distribution of environmental and social benefits and burdens 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.



Photo Credit: Jenny Gustafsson

## 2. Highlights

# 2023

1.

Published the **Zgharta Territorial Food Strategy**

2.

Reactivated a **Cooperative for Vegetable Producers** in Majd El Meouch

3.

Produced research on the **'Enabling Factors for the Adoption of Sustainable Agriculture'**

4.

Contributed to the organizing of **the Agroecology Coalition in Lebanon**

5.

Released Two Impactful Publications on Education, an **Assessment of Learning Gardens'** and a curriculum for **"Garden Activities"**

6.

Launched the **'Land Stories'** Platform featuring Five Agroecology Stories

### 3. Shifting to Sustainable Food Production

In 2023, Jibal continued to advance its support for agroecology, building on past learnings and new research to foster the adoption of sustainable farming practices.



### › Supporting Farmers in their Transition

Jibal strategically focused on a select group of farms poised to become exemplary models in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. This decision was informed by findings from our research on the Enabling Factors for the Adoption of Sustainable Agriculture in Lebanon.

We also developed a tool to assess the transition progress of these farmers from using conventional to agroecological practices. Fourteen farmers from North Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, Chouf, and South Lebanon, either already practicing or transitioning to agroecology, were selected for

tailored support. These farmers received personalized coaching and material assistance to facilitate their transformation into model agroecological farms, serving as inspirations for broader agricultural change.

### › Input Providers Support

Recognizing the need to boost local organic input production, Jibal expanded its support to input providers to include three new providers from Maghdouche (Saida district) and Kfarkela (Nabatiyeh district). They received technical coaching and in-kind support, enhancing their capacity to produce compost and natural pesticides.

### › Research: Enabling Factors for Shifting to Agroecology

Against the backdrop of Lebanon's agricultural landscape, this study was conducted to investigate the fundamental factors shaping farmers' choices regarding the adoption of sustainable farming methods. Cognitive, social, and behavioral dimensions are thoroughly examined, and built upon the findings, the study proposes recommendations to facilitate the widespread adoption of sustainable agriculture. These recommendations are intended to inform interventions and policies and ultimately enhance resilience and environmental sustainability within Lebanon's agricultural sector.



## 4. Alternative Access to Market

Finding fair and equitable access to market channels for farmers is a condition for allowing a sustainable transition to agroecological practices. In 2023, Jibal continued the work by developing a participative certification system for products and supporting groups and partners in building their sustainability.



Photo Credit: Jenny Gustafsson

### › Participatory Guarantee System

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally oriented quality assurance systems that provide certification based on the active participation of stakeholders. These systems build on trust, networks, and knowledge exchange, offering an alternative to third-party certifications. This approach addresses recurrent concerns from farmers and consumers about verifying the "sustainable" quality of agricultural products.

In preparation for the pilot of a PGS in 2024, we conducted a preliminary study of PGS case studies from France, Morocco, Belgium, and Tunisia to better understand their operational frameworks.

### › Solidarity Grocery Shop: Dikken El Mazraa

Jibal continued to support Dikken El Mazraa, a solidarity grocery shop in Beirut. This shop sources quality products from independent local producers and cooperatives, pricing them according to the social and financial situations of its members, thus making quality food accessible to vulnerable households. Our support for Dikken El Mazraa included strategic business modeling, marketing, communication, and fundraising.

### › Farmer-Owned Sales Cooperative

In Majd El Meouch, a village located in the Chouf area, Jibal supported the revival of a farmer's cooperative. This cooperative not only optimized collective production but also obtained a license to operate as a sales cooperative. Focused on improving market access, the cooperative began exploring opportunities for establishing a sales point in Beirut, with further developments planned for 2024.

## 5. Territorial Food Strategies and Plans

Jibal continued to prioritize territorial food planning to enhance food sovereignty by developing a localized solidarity economy, promoting sustainable practices, and addressing the social dimensions of food systems. Our efforts continued in the Zgharta region and introduced initiatives in the new area of Majd El Meouch in the Chouf.



### › Zgharta Region Food Strategy

Over the past years, Jibal conducted a comprehensive assessment of the Zgharta region's food system, identifying key stakeholders and leading to the creation of the Food Sovereignty Committee.

In 2023, the committee, in collaboration with Jibal, designed a comprehensive territorial food strategy aimed at securing food sovereignty and creating a model replicable across Lebanon. Several public events on topics like compost, soil, and seeds engaged broad audiences and specifically

targeted farmers to raise awareness about the strategy. Additionally, the committee worked to reengage dormant food-related cooperatives within the region, with the purpose of reviving them, recognizing their potential as foundational elements for the work to be implemented in the following years.

By year's end, the strategy was finalized and published, and preparations began for broader dissemination aimed at decision-makers and major NGOs.

### › Meouch Food Plan

For the past three years, Jibal has supported farmers in the Chouf area with training and coaching to transition to sustainable farming and connect with alternative and fair market channels. Early in 2023, in collaboration with the Majd El Meouch municipality, we initiated the development of a local food plan for Majd El Meouch.

This process began with a detailed mapping and assessment of the village's food landscape, identifying both primary and secondary food actors. The findings led to in-depth analysis and consultations with a

newly formed local committee to refine action points for the food plan to be implemented. These discussions helped shape a plan that will guide the municipality on future food and agricultural projects. The finalized food plan is scheduled for publication in 2024.

## 6. Education

Education, particularly on environmental justice, is central to Jibal's mission, aiming to create a sustainable and equitable future for all. Environmental justice ensures equitable access to natural resources and protects communities, especially marginalized ones, from disproportionate environmental

burdens. Jibal's educational program seeks to empower individuals, particularly the youth, to actively address and mitigate these disparities. Beyond individuals, Jibal believes in collective action to yield systemic change, integrating this approach into its curricula and activities.



### › Environmental Workshops and Field Trips

Since 2018, Jibal has been actively conducting workshops in schools such as Lycee Francais Tripoli, and field trips to locations such as Samen Eco-gardens in Fanar, Field to Fork in Qobb Elias, Buzuruna Juzuruna in Saadnayel and others, for schools such as Wellspring, IC Ain Aar, Al Ahli among others, to raise awareness on environmental justice. These activities are designed to empower students to become advocates for environmental and social justice.

### › Report: Assessment of Learning Gardens in Lebanon

This year marked the culmination of Jibal's ongoing efforts with the publication of the "Assessment of Learning Gardens in Lebanon" which describes the status, challenges, and aspirations of learning gardens across the country.

### › Curriculum: Learning Garden Activities

Jibal published and printed a curriculum of 33 workshops designed to nurture children's relationship with nature, their food, food producers, and with each other. By providing a space for them to reconnect with nature and learn about the world around them,

and by nurturing their sense of community, we aim to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards who will work together to be able to thrive on this planet. The curriculum, developed for children aged 7 to 14, available in both English and Arabic, uses nature-based, experiential, rights-based, and child-centered pedagogy to create meaningful learning experiences for children.

### › Supporting Educational Institutions

#### Chatila Children and Youth Center: Farasheh Project

Jibal has been involved in supporting the Children and Youth Center at the Shatila camp through the Farasheh project, which started in 2021 and continued into early 2023. Jibal's support was done

through the development of a learning garden, learning spaces, and an environmental curriculum to enrich the educational opportunities for the youth at the center. The project's coordinators, led by Lilia Benbelaid, along with the committed team of CYC, have enhanced the building and improved the yard in front of it.

Lilia and the team are now working on adding urban furniture to create welcoming spaces for people to meet and spend time. The garden at the school is now actively used daily by children for playing, growing, and learning.





## 7. Training and Workshops

Jibal consistently conducts training sessions and workshops on diverse topics related to the environment, agriculture, and education. Our training approach is anchored in popular education principles, promoting a participative, experiential, and rights-based learning environment. We emphasize collective work, drawing on the personal experiences of participants to foster mutual exchange and build actionable knowledge and a sense of agency.

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In 2023, Jibal delivered a comprehensive three-day training program in Hammana, Lebanon for a diverse group of trainers. This program was designed to help them incorporate our participative and experiential methodology into their own workshops. Participants developed content for their upcoming initiatives in various fields such as alternative journalism and media, food, agroecology,

sexuality and health education, and anti-racial discrimination efforts. They were also introduced to feminist facilitation tools and approaches, enhancing their engagement capabilities.

### > Collaborative Projects with 'Switch Perspective'

Over the past two years, Jibal has collaborated with the 'Switch Perspective' collective to provide workshops for journalists, researchers, and storytellers. Switch Perspective offered opportunities for participants to reflect on their personal experiences, analyze their roles within society, and explore their potential to effect change. We have developed and implemented several formats, including a one-week residency focused on storytelling about a specific neighborhood in Saida and a one-week training, "the summer workshop," which brought together storytellers from around the world with speakers from Lebanon.

## 8. Narratives and Media

Jibal's work on narratives was pursued in 2023. While maintaining a focus on migration themes through the ongoing project, "Switch Perspective", we also began to emphasize agricultural narratives by collecting and crafting stories from various farmers

across Lebanon. This new focus involves a collaborative effort between researchers and storytellers, aiming to bring diverse agricultural experiences to a wider audience. The stories have been compiled into a dedicated webpage, "Land Stories," which is set to be launched in 2024.



Photo Credit: Jenny Gustafsson

*The roasting process serves a double purpose: to dry the kennels and to give them a thick, smoky flavor.*

## 9. Publications

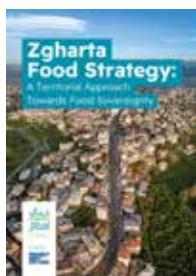


### Enabling Factors for the Adoption of Sustainable Agriculture in Lebanon

The Enabling Factors study examines the shift towards sustainable agriculture in Lebanon, exploring key factors influencing farmers' decisions through interviews and observations. It highlights the roles of economic, social, and environmental considerations and proposes a framework to enhance sustainable practices and policy interventions within the agricultural sector.

### Land Stories – حكايات الأرض

Land Stories is a storytelling project centered on Lebanon and the nearby region. All stories portray people and the crops they grow, from wheat and apples to citrus and aubergine, on land that was central to the beginnings of world agricultural history.



### Zgharta Food Strategy: A Territorial Approach Towards Food Sovereignty

This publication outlines the development and implementation of a food strategy in the Zgharta region of Lebanon. The report emphasizes the urgent need for a sustainable and resilient food system due to hyperinflation, increasing food insecurity, and heavy reliance on imports. The territorial food strategy aims to unite various stakeholders, including producers, policymakers, NGOs, and local communities, to create environmentally and economically sustainable food systems that prioritize food sovereignty, promote agroecology, and ensure access to affordable and nutritious food for all.



### Learning Garden Activities

A series of 33 workshops for children aged 7 to 14 offering a nature-based, experiential, and child-centered approach to education. These workshops utilize engaging tools such as theater, crafts, sensory experiences, and practical skills to reconnect children with nature, promote food sovereignty, and instill a sense of environmental justice. This curriculum will help nurture children's relationships with nature, each other, their community, their food, and their food producers, inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards for a sustainable future.



### Agroecology In Lebanon: Analyzing the current scene and exploring upscaling potentials.

Since 2019, Lebanon has been passing through a tremendous economic crisis which has caused significant social and environmental damage, highlighting issues in the conventional food system model driven by agroindustry. This publication is built on the understanding that agroecology– an alternative food system vision– can be a tool to build a more equitable food system. This research is interested in how agroecology as a framework (specifically one that considers food sovereignty) is being applied in Lebanon, with an underlying question: how can it be upscaled from scattered, isolated initiatives into a more cohesive, cross-country approach which influences the agricultural and food practices and policies in Lebanon?

A documentary following agroecology through its historical progress in Lebanon was also developed as part of this project under the name “Agroecology, from Past to Future”.



### Assessment of Learning Gardens in Lebanon

A number of alternative educational initiatives have emerged in Lebanon, many of which have begun addressing connection to nature and land, place-based immersion, food justice, and sustainability more generally. These initiatives fall within the category of 'learning garden', which can be broadly understood as a dynamic space outside of the traditional classroom where experiential learning takes place. This study identifies the social and well-being components of LGs to help to gain a baseline idea of their various uses, challenges, and needs.



### Exploring Alternative Food Initiatives in Lebanon

While the system of the wholesale market in Lebanon for farmers is most of the times unfair and nontransparent to farmers, many alternatives have been developing during the last decade. From farmer's markets, to grocery cooperatives, this report explores these different options, with the aim of spreading these models and learning more from their success and challenges.



### Report: Environmental Justice in Lebanon

The report explores environmental movements and mobilizations that have taken place in Lebanon over the last two decades. The multiplicity of cases explored often reveal connections between claims for preserving the environment and claims for social justice. Social injustice relates not only to the redistribution of wealth, but also to recognizing the voices of the less powerful and allowing them to take part in the decision-making process.



### Environmental Justice Workshops

Four Workshops on Environmental Justice: Public Spaces, Water, Waste, and Food, using activities that aim not only to transmit information and engage with participants on the cognitive level, but also encourage a change in attitudes and behavior.



### New Routes to Narrating Migration

The publication builds on interviews made with journalists, researchers, civil society activists and other storytellers working in Lebanon and elsewhere, all of whom at some point participated in a Switch Perspective workshop. It profits from knowledge created in our trainings and workshops on the topic of migration, including takeaways from numerous discussions, reflections and shared experiences. It follows the storytelling process from beginning to end, starting from questions about the journalists or storytellers themselves and ending with the publication of the finalized story.

## 10. Partners and Funders

### MAIN PARTNERS



**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**

### MAIN FUNDERS



**Norwegian People's Aid**  
Since 2023



**HBS Heinrich Böll Stiftung**  
Since 2022



**Porticus**  
Since 2023



**Friedrich Ebert Stiftung FES**  
Since 2019



**Fondation de France**  
Since 2020



**GIZ**  
Since 2017



**Help-ev-Germany**  
2022

