



ORDER OF MALTA  
LEBANON



# HARVESTING HOPE, GROWING RESILIENCE

YOUR HANDBOOK

# What is the Agro-Humanitarian Program of the Order of Malta Lebanon?

The Agro-Humanitarian Program of the Order of Malta Lebanon (OML) represents a **beacon of hope and resilience in the face of adversity**. It is more than just a program; it is a testament to the unwavering commitment of the OML to **uplift communities and promote peace**.

This initiative carries a vision of empowerment, agricultural development and enhanced humanitarian assistance to **create sustainable solutions for Lebanon's challenges**. It is all about compassion, innovation, tradition, and

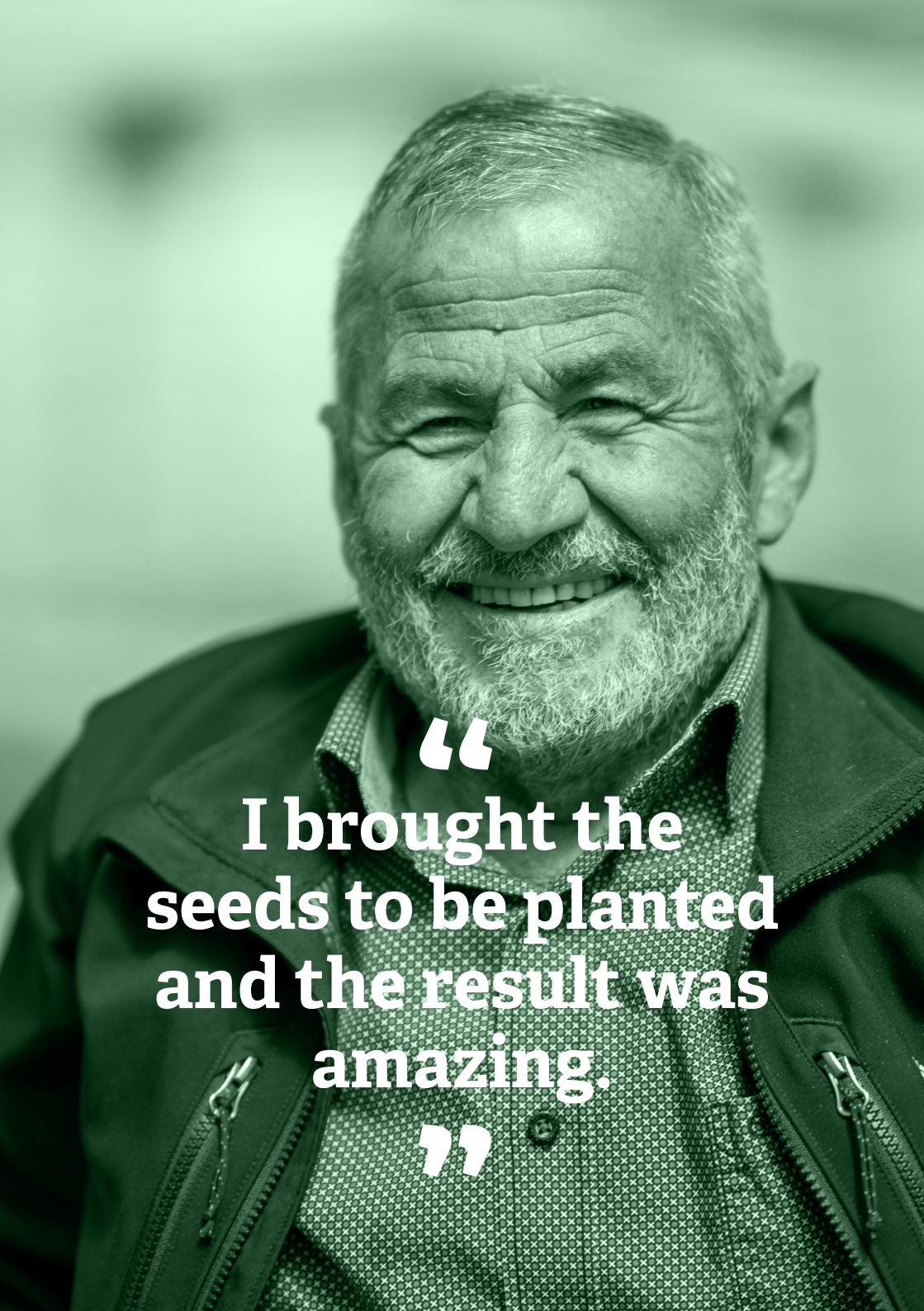
progress for a brighter future.

At its core, the program aims to not only address immediate needs but also to **cultivate lasting change**. By promoting indigenous agricultural practices and providing vital support to farmers and businesses, **it nurtures the resilience of vulnerable populations and fosters economic recovery**.

Through collaboration with various stakeholders, the program equips communities with knowl-

edge, resources, and opportunities, laying the foundation for **sustainable development and prosperity**.

In the fields of Lebanon, amidst the rich soil and timeless landscapes, **the Agro-Humanitarian Program is sowing the seeds of hope**. It is a testament to the enduring spirit of humanity and the belief that, **together, we can build a future of abundance and dignity for all**.



“

**I brought the  
seeds to be planted  
and the result was  
amazing.**

”

## Why did the Order of Malta Lebanon decide to venture into Agriculture?

The Sovereign Order of Malta stands as the world's oldest humanitarian organization, **dedicated to healthcare and social welfare for over 900 years**. Breaking new ground in its illustrious

history, the Order has now embarked on this agricultural venture with the new program launched by the Order of Malta Lebanon.

The decision to embark on this new journey stems

from a **recognition of the critical role that agriculture plays in addressing key humanitarian concerns, particularly in Lebanon after the 2019 economic crisis.**







### Food Security

Agriculture is fundamental to ensuring food security, which is a pressing issue in many parts of Lebanon. By investing in agriculture, the Order of Malta Lebanon can contribute to efforts aimed at increasing food availability and accessibility, thereby helping to **alleviate hunger and malnutrition in vulnerable communities in the long run.**



### Economic Recovery

Agriculture offers opportunities for sustainable development by promoting environmentally-friendly practices, and fostering the economic growth of food systems in rural areas. By supporting agricultural initiatives, the Order of Malta Lebanon can contribute to **context-based economic recovery that will eventually lead to long-term sustainability and resilience in local communities.**



### Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups

Agriculture can serve as a means to **promote social inclusion and empower vulnerable groups**, such as smallholder farmers, women, and youth, by providing them with **opportunities for income generation, skills development, and community engagement.**



### Community Resilience

Agriculture plays a vital role in building community resilience to various challenges, including **climate change, economic shocks, and food crises.** By supporting agriculture as a main economic sector in rural areas, the Order of Malta Lebanon can help **communities become better equipped to absorb, cope with, and recover from adverse shocks.**

Overall, venturing into agriculture allows the Order of Malta Lebanon to address multiple humanitarian concerns simultaneously, including **food insecurity, poverty, environmental degradation, and social exclusion, while also promoting sustainable development and community resilience in Lebanon.**

The Order of Malta Lebanon places agriculture at the heart of its vision 2030, reflecting its vital role in a comprehensive strategy for **sustainable development and community empowerment.**

## Why is the program called Agro-Humanitarian?

The name reflects the program's dual objectives: **supporting agriculture and promoting humanitarian action.**

The "agro" aspect refers to agriculture and food security. This means that the program aims to **support the farming community (farmers and businesses) by developing sustainable farming practices, improving agricultural**

**productivity and economy, strengthening resilience to climate shocks, and ensuring food security.**

In addition, "humanitarian" transcends the typical connotation of aid, focusing instead on **viewing each person as a fellow human being, worthy of dignity, respect, and support.**



## How does the Agro-Humanitarian Program exemplify integrated approaches in agriculture & health?

The Agro-Humanitarian Program exemplifies integrated approaches in agriculture and health by pairing agricultural interventions with health-centered initiatives to address **the interconnected challenges of food security, nutrition, and community well-being**. It promotes nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and supports small farmers in adopting practices that **enhance**

**the nutritional quality of their produce**, while aiming to improve dietary diversity and introducing a balanced diet system. Additionally, **it integrates health education and raises awareness on the importance of nutritious diets, proper hygiene practices, and disease prevention strategies**, while facilitating access to essential healthcare services for community

members. By empowering families and local communities through participatory approaches, the program strives to **promote healthy lifestyles, and leave a lasting mark on the communities it serves**.

# Who drafted the vision of the Agro-Humanitarian Program?

The Agro-Humanitarian program is the result of a collective effort guided by a global vision set forth by the President of the Order of Malta Lebanon, in collaboration with the Agro-Humanitarian board, comprised of experts in agriculture and humanitarian services.

Our approach is unique because **it is shaped by our unwavering commitment to listening to the voices of the communities we serve.** We recognize that the most effective solutions emerge from **understanding the**

**specific needs, challenges, and aspirations of the people on the ground.** Therefore, our program operates on a principle of active engagement with local communities, **establishing a community platform, and fostering a dialogue that informs every aspect of our initiatives.** By combining top-down strategic leadership with grassroots insights, **we strive to ensure that our efforts are not only impactful but also deeply rooted in empathy and understanding.**



## How does OML nurture resilience through its Agro-Humanitarian initiative?

In response to Lebanon's economic crisis, the Order of Malta Lebanon launched an innovative Agro-Humanitarian program to address pressing food system challenges. **This initiative aims to enhance the health sector and pave the way for economic recovery by supporting smallholder farmers and businesses.** Through training, resources, and cash grants, the program promotes **sustainable agricultural practices and crop diversification, bolstering resilience to climate**

**change.** By filling gaps in local value chains and facilitating access to markets, the Order seeks **to stabilize prices and boost economic growth.**

The Agro-Humanitarian Program, launched in 2020, represents the Order of Malta Lebanon's inaugural foray into agriculture. Targeting communities near its healthcare centers, **the initiative integrates healthcare and agricultural interventions for holistic community development.** It also aims to empower small

farmers and promote sustainable practices, while **fostering food security, livelihoods, and resilience among vulnerable populations, offering a beacon of hope in Lebanon's challenging socio-economic landscape.**

## What were the short-term objectives of the Agro-Humanitarian Program?

The Agro-Humanitarian Program aims to lay the groundwork for sustainable agricultural development, build the capacity of small farmers, and contribute to improved food security and livelihoods in Lebanon's rural communities, by setting forth a number of short-term goals, including:



### Launching Agro-Humanitarian Centers

Establishing a dedicated network of service provision centers equipped with resources and facilities to serve as hubs for on-the job agricultural training, seedling production, and community engagement activities.



### Establishing Partnerships

Forging strategic partnerships with local agricultural organizations, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions to leverage expertise, resources, and connections for the implementation of the program.



### Providing Seedling Production Services

Providing small farmers with high-quality seedlings tailored to local growing conditions to enhance crop yields and resilience.



### Conducting Training Sessions for Farmers

Organizing training sessions, workshops, and capacity-building programs for small farmers on sustainable agricultural practices, modern farming techniques, pest and disease management, and post-harvest handling to improve productivity and quality.



### Offering In-kind and cash Grants

Providing in-kind and cash grants and support to small farmers and food businesses, including equipment, agricultural inputs, and access to markets, to enhance their production capacity, income generation, and market competitiveness.



### Promoting Community Engagement

Through the initiation of farmers' groups, the launch of community engagement initiatives to foster peer-to-peer learning and collaboration, and the exchange of best practices among farmers and stakeholders.



# 8000 FARMERS & MSME

supported through an integrated package of technical assistance and cash/in-kind grants



# What are the long-term plans for the Agro-Humanitarian Program?

The Agro-Humanitarian Program aims to contribute to the sustainable development of Lebanon's agricultural sector, enhance food security and nutrition outcomes, and build resilience to future shocks and challenges, by pursuing long-term plans, such as:

## **A** SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL RECOVERY

Implementing initiatives aimed at supporting the long-term recovery and revitalization of Lebanon's agriculture sector, particularly in conflict-affected areas. This may involve providing ongoing assistance, resources, and technical support to farmers to rebuild their livelihoods and restore their productivity.

## **B** ENHANCING FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE

Fostering the development of domestic food systems through the promotion of nutrition-sensitive and climate-smart agriculture value chains. This includes investing in diversified crop production, improving post-harvest handling and storage facilities, promoting sustainable farming practices, and integrating nutrition education and awareness into agricultural programming.

## **C** STRENGTHENING SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Working towards strengthening supporting institutions within the agricultural sector to improve governance, policy coherence, and service quality. This may involve advocating for policy reforms, enhancing institutional capacities through training and capacity-building programs, and promoting coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders.



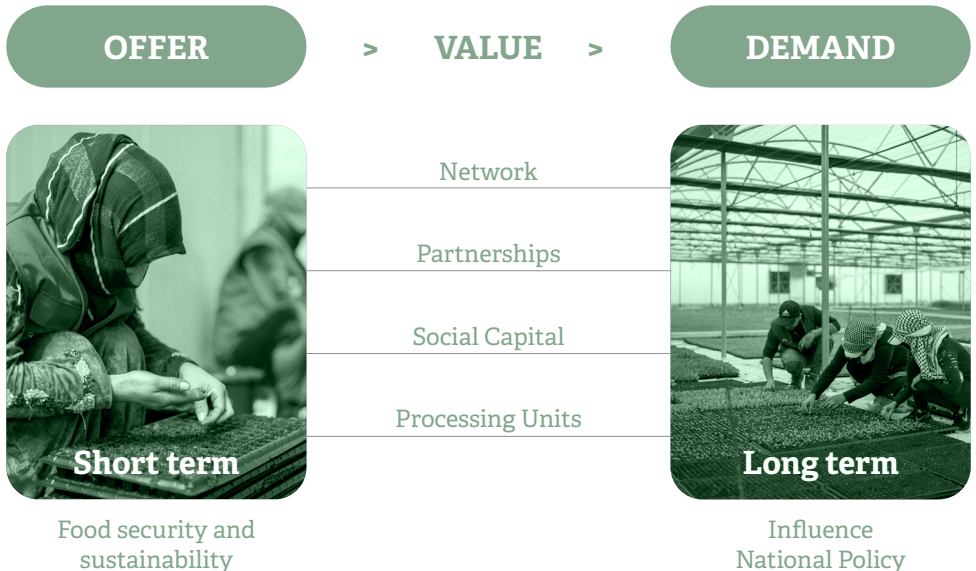
**D** FACILITATING MARKET ACCESS

Facilitating market access for smallholder farmers by establishing linkages with local and regional markets, improving market infrastructure and transportation networks, and supporting the development of value-added products and market diversification strategies.

**E** PROMOTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Investing in research and innovation initiatives to advance agricultural technologies, practices, and solutions tailored to the specific needs and challenges of Lebanon's agricultural sector.

## NUTRITION SENSITIVE AND CLIMATE SMART VALUE CHAINS - SELECTED AND STUDIED



## What makes the Agro-Humanitarian Program of the Order of Malta Lebanon unique?

The distinctiveness of the Agro-Humanitarian Program of the Order of Malta Lebanon lies in its universal approach, which covers the entire country and is not confined to a single location. By establishing a permanent presence across various regions, the program reaches vulnerable communities throughout Lebanon.

In 2023, seven value chains assessments focused on nutritious agricultural products were conducted, providing insights into sub-sector details, nutritional values, health ben-

efits, assessment methods, market analysis, core functions, environment, challenges, intervention priorities and strategic directions.

The assessments highlighted health benefits and business potential but also revealed underdevelopment, high costs, outdated methods, and quality issues in studied chains. Lebanon faces limitations in locally grown food markets due to data gaps, restrictive regulations on exports, and reliance on traditional sales. The findings underscored the necessity of a multi-

faceted approach leveraging on technology, skills, market access, and policy support, to promote nutrition and economic prosperity in rural areas through improved value chains.

Furthermore, the program's key partnerships with local and international organizations, governmental agencies, faculties and community stakeholders make it more effective and sustainable, building on collective expertise and resources to create a lasting impact on Lebanon's agricultural sector.



# 6 AHCs

established across Lebanon  
(total surface 16.6ha)

# What services do the Agro-Humanitarian Centers provide?



## PROCESSING UNITS

Processing units were established for specific production chains according to the target areas. These units started offering processing services and will ultimately produce roasted green wheat (freekeh), zaatar mix, essential oil, compost, etc. following a detailed assessment of the nutritive value chains of each area.



## SEEDLINGS' NURSERIES

OML established seedlings' nurseries not only to produce both horticulture and aromatics seedlings but also to receive farmers' seeds and convert them into seedlings as a service.



## CAPACITY BUILDING

All farmers in the program receive training on best agricultural practices of summer and winter crops, nutritive sensitive value chain, and other topics. The objective is to empower farmers through training courses geared towards climate-smart crops.





### GRANTS

In-kind and cash grants are provided to small farmers, food processors, agricultural cooperatives, and relevant government institutions to support them in their projects.



### INTERACTIVE SPACES

Awareness sessions on the topic of nutrition are conducted to educate communities on healthy habits and balanced diets. These interactive spaces provide school-aged children with information related to nutrition and agriculture, as well as the right tools to make informed decisions.



### COMMUNITY GROUPS

OML launched many initiatives responding to the needs of the vulnerable communities located within the scope of its community health and Agro-Humanitarian centers.

## How were the locations for the Agro-Humanitarian project determined?

Over the years, the Order of Malta Lebanon has earned the unwavering trust of the communities surrounding its Community Healthcare Centers. This trust is at the heart of our mission, driving us to extend our reach and impact.

Therefore, with the inception of the Agro-Humanitarian Program, we decided to build on that

trust, and made a strategic decision to anchor ourselves in the vicinity of these centers, where we planned to seamlessly integrate essential services, address multiple needs, and maximize our positive impact on people's lives.

As a matter of fact, our approach goes beyond simply providing assistance; and also focuses

on forging meaningful connections and fostering sustainable development from within.

Through this approach, we are not merely agents of change but catalysts for lasting transformation, as we reiterate our commitment to serving the holistic well-being of the communities we are privileged to work with.



# 5,092 FARMERS BUSINESSES

improved their technical capacity by attending training sessions in OML centers, 38% among them are women.



# Building Bridges: Empowering Communities through Partnerships

Through years of dedicated effort, we have built an invaluable network of dependable partners who play an instrumental role in ensuring the effectiveness of our mission, including our partners who have generously donated their lands for a 20-year period to support our Agro-Humanitarian program:

**01** The Order of the Carmelite Fathers

**02** The Mariamite Maronite Order

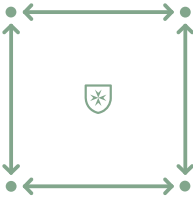
**03** The Jesuits

**04** The Lebanese Maronite Order

**05** The National Litani River Authority

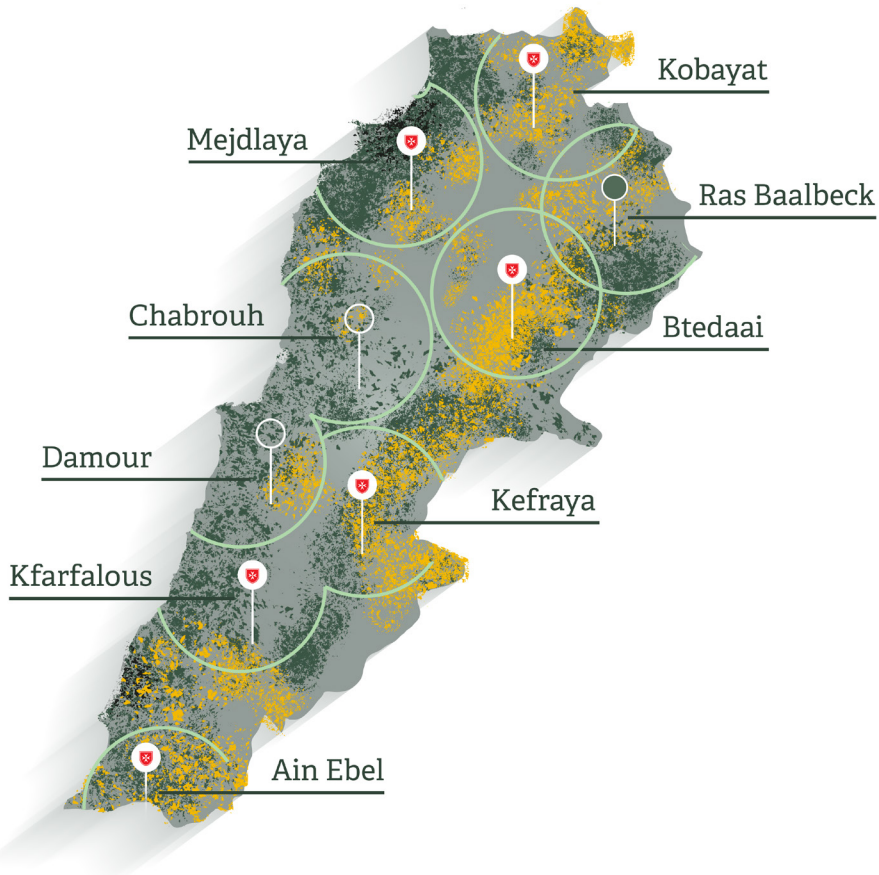
**06** Mr. Fady Romanos

By the end of 2023, 6 Agro-Humanitarian Centers were established in catchment areas of OML Community Health Centers and a partnership was created with a local NGO, for a total of 7 centers.



**70%**  
**AGRICULTURE**  
**LAND** shall be covered by OML services within a radius of 20km





**Legend:**

**Agriculture Land Cover class**

- Annual production
- Greenhouses
- Perennial production

**OML Agriculture Centers**

Area of Agriculture lands not included - 25.11%  
 Status - Area Coverage percentage of Agricultural lands

- Existing - 62.78%
- Future - 5.68%
- Partner - 6.43%
- 20Km radius distance from center



**MEJDALYA**

**In Zgharta District, North  
Governorate, with an area  
of 14,000 square meters**

In partnership with **the Order of the Carmelite Fathers**

Seedlings production capacity: 1,536,000 seedlings as one cycle.  
9,216,000 seedling per year.

Training room accommodation capacity: 30 persons

1 solar energy unit producing 48.5 kw



**81/411096**







## KOBAYAT

In Akkar District, North Governorate, with an area of 8,000 square meters

In partnership with **the Mariamite Maronite Order**  
Fencing the site 382 Lm

Seedlings production capacity: 1,024,000 seedlings as one batch.  
6,144,000 seedling per year.

Training room accommodation capacity: 30

1 solar energy unit producing 22 kw



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**AIN EBEL**

**In Bint Jbeil district,  
Nabatiyeh governorate,  
with an area of 16,000  
square meters**



In partnership with **the Jesuits**

Seedlings production capacity: 1,024,000 seedlings as one cycle.  
6,144,000 seedling per year.

Training room accommodation capacity: 90 persons

1 solar energy unit producing 154 kw

Freekeh and Oregano Processing Unit of 586 m2 total area

 **70/197158**







**BTEDAI**

**In Baalbek District,  
Baalbek-Hermel  
Governorate, with an area  
of 50,000 square meters**

In partnership with **the Lebanese Maronite Order**

Seedling production capacity: 2,048,000 seedlings as one cycle.  
12,288,000 seedling per year.

Training room accommodation capacity: 30 persons

1 solar energy unit producing 30 kw

Essential Oil Processing Unit 800 sqm



**71/292234**







## KHERBET QANAFAR

In the western Bekaa district, Bekaa governorate, with an area of 50,000 square meters

In partnership with **the National Litani River Authority**

Seedling production capacity: 2,048,000 seedlings as one cycle.  
12,288,000 seedling per year

Training room accommodation capacity: 30 persons

1 solar energy unit producing 85 kw

Composting Processing Unit 10,000 sqm

 70/159098





## KFARFALOUS

**In the Jezzine District of  
the South Governorate of  
Lebanon, with an area of  
20,000 square meters**

In partnership with **Mr. Fadi Romanos**

Seedlings production capacity: 1,024,000 seedlings as one cycle.  
6,144,000 seedling per year

Training room accommodation capacity: 30 persons

1 solar energy unit producing 30 kw



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## RAS BAALBECK

In addition, a partnership was established with Cooperation Without Borders (CWB) in an existing center in Baalbek District, Baalbek-Hermel Governorate, with an area of 25,000 m<sup>2</sup>



**This program is**

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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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