



Endline report of the impact assessment of the FCDO-funded Food and Agriculture programme in Syria



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

The programme/policy:

The ‘Supporting emergency needs, early recovery and longer-term resilience in Syria’s agriculture sector’ programme delivered emergency and recovery support to vulnerable smallholder farmers across Syria.

- The programme’s main objectives were:
 - to increase food availability through improved smallholder production
 - to build resilience and recovery of households and the agricultural sector against shocks by increasing the productive capacity of households via emergency packages of agricultural inputs
- It is assumed that these inputs will enhance access to alternative income sources and irrigation technologies.
- Interventions included providing: vegetable kits, poultry, beekeeping, livestock vaccines, vegetable seedlings and agriculture tools, sprout production unit, low tunnel nurseries, rehabilitation of irrigation systems, cow feed and seed multiplication.



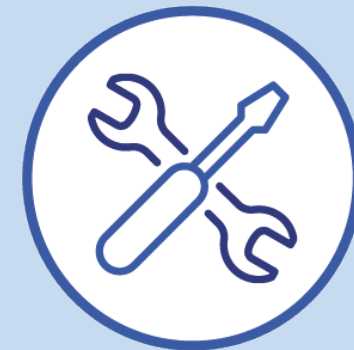
Methodology



The impact analysis for the programme uses **difference-in-differences (DiD) approach**, collecting household survey data from beneficiary households and a matched comparator group of households that did not participate in the programme, before, during and after the intervention.



Ahead of the DiD, the **time trends for the overall sample to present changes** that occurred in Syria between the baseline and the endline survey were examined.



Methodology



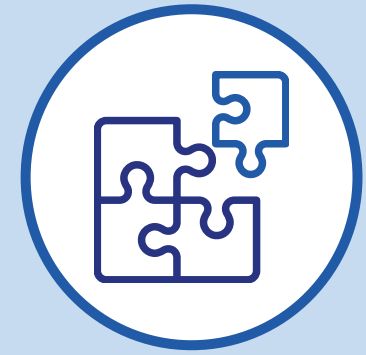
The **endline survey, which was newly collected by FAO Syria, is also analysed**. Taking into account differences between the beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups and the difference by intervention type.



Panel data was also collected to quantify the causal impact of the programme on food security and agricultural production. For example, this included gender, age, education and governorate (provision). The data uses a smaller sample of households who were interviewed both at baseline and endline, this was then used to match beneficiary and control groups.



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Findings



Overall, the time trend analysis showed a significant reduction in the use of harmful coping strategies, particularly in the sale of productive assets and children taking extra jobs to support household needs, in the beneficiary group.



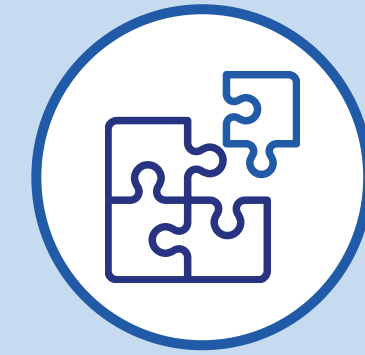
The DiD showed that households in the beneficiary group had better food security. The positive differences in food security were the strongest in households that received the vegetable kits or seedlings.



It also showed that households who received livestock vaccines, poultry or beekeeping did not increase their diet diversity and food security. However, beekeeping beneficiaries showed stronger resilience against productive asset depletion to deal with shocks while beneficiaries of livestock vaccines are less likely to rely on credit to deal with food shortages.



According to the DiD, the programme significantly strengthened food security of vulnerable smallholders by 13% from baseline values, particularly for those receiving support in vegetable production.



Findings



Moreover, female-headed households benefited considerably from the programme, increasing their food security status by **32%** compared to female-headed households who did not receive support.



Impact was also stronger for households with access to irrigation, who saw a **23%** improvement in their food security due to the programme.



There was also notable evidence on the positive impacts on harvests and yields, particularly for vegetable crops.





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Impacts



Six key lessons were identified through this evaluation:

- Building resilience to agricultural challenges (e.g. drought) requires comprehensive and integrated programmes with a long time horizon to counter the multiple shocks faced in a conflict-affected setting.
- The targeting of the intervention needs to be fine-tuned to increase the observed impacts on different beneficiary subgroups (e.g., female-headed households or smallholders with access to irrigation).
- To group similar interventions, rather than to spread interventions widely and thinly, as the combination of multiple interventions was shown to be more effective.
- To continue to strengthen rural markets in Syria as a way of reducing dependency on credit, either with vouchers or cash, in order to improve resilience.
- To continue to invest in learning about how best to build food security and resilience through humanitarian agricultural interventions in conflict-affected settings, as such learning is a global public good.



Next steps



A planned qualitative assessment will improve understanding of the impact pathways, complementing the findings outlined in this report.



Links



Final end line report