# 1. Objective and relevance

## 1.1 The main purpose with the intervention, including challenges that need to be addressed

GROW will work to support active citizenship & community engagement in underprivileged children through educational approaches in Learning Gardens (LGs) in the two communities Sa’adneyel and Zgharta, by building capacity in two community farms to host LG spaces and deliver actionable knowledge on environmental & social justice to children - in supplement to the Lebanese education system. The current layers of pressures in Lebanon caused by the financial & economic crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut Port Explosion, and the Syrian refugee crisis have placed increased strain on public education in Lebanon with a widespread lack of access to quality education or any education, especially among the most underprivileged Lebanese & Syrian children in the country[[1]](#footnote-1). At the same time, children’s access to public spaces and natural settings in Lebanon is diminishing– critical factors to their development. These trends are magnified in two communities, Zgharta (North Lebanon) and Sa’adnayel (Bekaa Valley). Here displaced Syrians and local Lebanese children grow up lacking opportunities to develop decision-making, problem-solving and environmental stewardship skills needed for civil society engagement.

With GROW we develop LGs as a new approach in Lebanon that offers open spaces for children and youth to link to nature and active participation through quality education: As holistic & dynamic learning spaces, LGs enables spaces for the children and youth to learn about agriculture, food sovereignty, social and environmental justice topics while thinking, reflecting and discussing collectively about society, locally, regional and globally, to develop life skills for their active roles as future citizens. In the two communities, this kind of learning is critical for graduating active future citizens who can address environmental and social issues in their community. By creating an enabling environment for quality education delivery (i.e. trained educators, an involved community, context-relevant curricula), we wish to further the benefits of learning gardens in the two communities. LGs have proven to be prime spaces for integrative learning which encourages the usage of classroom lessons to create real-life solutions, increase individual life satisfaction, provide a sense of place, promote healthier eating habits, teamwork and cooperation, appreciate locally grown food sources, teach environmental management and engage social development[[2]](#footnote-2). The long term intention of the project is to use the two LGs as models to establish an approach that reflects values of social and environmental justice and possesses the dynamism to support the children’s future active citizenship and link to nature. The intervention will assess how LGs as educational tools take form in the different

communities with regards to methods, impacts and challenges.

*“The learning garden allowed children to be out of their usual environments and homes, take some fresh air in a safe place & to be part of a place which is interesting in its diversity of activities and people” - Ferdi (Buzuruna Juzuruna), experiences from a previous intervention.*

**Building on a pilot project -** The proposed project builds on a previous CISU supported intervention[[3]](#footnote-3). The previous intervention initiated the rapidly growing LG network in Lebanon and also with great success proved how LGs possess untapped potential in Lebanon, especially in supporting underprivileged children to access quality learning experiences. The positive impacts of the intervention were proven in different ways: (1) participants’ high levels of engagement & interest in subject matter, (2) participants’ changed behaviours & social exchanges before and after the intervention (3) participants’ changed interaction with the natural world before & after the intervention. The gardens provided children with a rare opportunity to be active and empowered participants in their communities. This defied prevailing discourses on the passive role of children in general, and more specifically the narrative of ‘powerlessness’ among displaced Syrians. The local organizations involved in the previous intervention (all being part of the LG network), also showed a high level of interest & engagement in furthering the LG model in Lebanon.

Lessons learned from the previous intervention emphasised the importance of a coherent, transparent project with relevant, qualified partners that can help building the local capacity to (1) sustainably maintain the gardens and (2) ensure educational activities can continue beyond the intervention period. As the previous intervention included more than six local partners, with FHF as main partner to facilitate the project locally but without the means being able to do so, these partnerships became too difficult and incoherent thus keeping the progress of the interventions’ potential down. To embrace this challenge, GROW includes only 2 local partners and 1 local coordinator all identified with the capacities to run and facilitate this project thereby aiming for a more coherent, sustainable, and locally anchored intervention. Previously, the LGs were placed in very diverse settings addressing unique challenges that weren’t convergent. The LGs also included a broad range of age groups - making reproducible education provision practices hard to pinpoint. Thus, this project will facilitate LGs within similar demographic contexts and solely include children aged 6 - 14 years old. The primary lessons learned from previous intervention highlighted that we need to address (1) capacity-building of educational instructors, (2) the development of context-relevant curricula, (3) the educational needs of the underprivileged children in affected areas. In light of these realizations, we now opt for a more focused intervention design with fewer yet qualified partners aiming for a stronger and more transparent partnership as well as intervention.

The abovementioned reflections holistically informed this project’s design, from the selection of location to identification of target groups to partnership set-up. The reflections also considered conditions that better guarantee the continuity of the LGs. First, we learned that LGs developed in community spaces had great advantages such as: (1) accessibility to more people from the surrounding community (2) resilience to COVID-19 lockdowns or sudden political shocks in the country[[4]](#footnote-4). Second, we recognized that the previous partner setup– which did not involve organizations well-versed in farming– proved too complex. Second, we learned that not enough human resources for LG management were set aside to meet the previous project’s full potential. Third, we learned the importance of ensuring continuity & local ownership, by engaging local trainers, volunteers and caretakers in ongoing capacity building as well as providing them with active roles in the project– which will be enhanced more greatly in this intervention. Also, more resources will be added to enable multi-functions of the gardens for the local communities (e.g. social spaces) to increase local ownership. Fourth, instead of stretching resources across 4 gardens in 4 locations like in the last intervention, 2 gardens will receive dedicated focus. This way more groups of children can be welcomed at the two respective LG spaces. After this process is tested thoroughly in these enabling settings, this work can then inform the expansion of LGs in different settings (e.g. NGO-run educational centers or public schools) as well as advocacy work.

## 1.2 The context of the intervention:

The farm in Zgharta, called Ghossoun Zgharta (GZ), is situated in a peri-urban area between Zgharta, Tripoli, Kobbe, and Majdlayya, a crossroad of several neighbourhoods and communities of varying political and religious affiliations, populated by lower and lower-middle class families from all the cities and neighbourhoods around. This area includes the city with the largest poverty rate in Lebanon (Tripoli) that accommodates 230,000 Syrian refugees[[5]](#footnote-5) living in harsh conditions. The farm in Sa’adneyel, Buzuruna Juzuruna (BZJ), is in the Bekaa, one of the most underprivileged cadasters in the country. According to UNHCR, the Bekaa region hosts 340,600 registered refugees among which 56.5% are children under 18 years old. In Saadnayel, 17,161 Syrian refugees are registered, one of the highest concentration rates of refugees in the whole region. Syrian children in this area have poor access to education, with only 54% of them being enrolled in primary and secondary schools (67% nationally). Bekaa is also a key agricultural region in Lebanon (80% of the region’s GDP) and most children will be from farming communities, now experiencing a knowledge gap due to the children's

lack of education.

In both Sa’adneyel and Zgharta, reflecting a nationwide challenge, the public education sector is under strain due to the COVID-19 situation and the high saturation of classes due to the Syrian refugee crisis. Public schools now deliver classes in two shifts (morning and evening) without being able to accommodate students’ varying education levels and backgrounds, far from being able to cope with online teaching and without capability to accommodate all children. The informal educational centers struggle to meet the need of educational support coming from this pressure. This proposed intervention provides educational support in environmental and social justice to complement public education in a context that is familiar and useful to the children involved. Both farms are surrounded by semi-rural, low-income to poor communities that possess socio-cultural diversity, providing opportunities for richer inter- and intragroup exchanges. These overlapping characteristics at the LGs’ locations will allow us to contextualize best practices and account for pedagogical modifications addressing the socio-cultural contexts.

Describe whether the intervention takes place in a stable or fragile context:

Lebanon is not on OECD’s list of fragile states[[6]](#footnote-6). Nevertheless, we need to pay attention to the current state of affairs. While Lebanon’s government is moderately stable and representative of its diversity, its poor service delivery has resulted in a legitimacy crisis, limited capacity for change and rising financial instability due to amongst other corruption in government. Access to food, gas and medicine is getting severe[[7]](#footnote-7). The intervention engages in partnership with two strong local civil society organizations experienced in handling international funding in the current state and in working with underprivileged groups.

##

## 1.3 The interventions strengthening of civil society organisation

GROW will strengthen civil society in two ways. First, it is sowing the seeds of civic engagement and active citizenship for a target group often overlooked in interventions furthering social and environmental justice: stigmatized children. The intervention nurtures critical skills in the generation of future citizens by providing them with a space to begin acquiring and exercising pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors such as collaboration, ecological care, and stewardship of a public space. Studies have proven that children who are able to develop these skills early on, carry them for life.[[8]](#footnote-8) Much of the curricula developed will be dedicated to highlighting the importance of fair decision-making processes and social justice principles which they will learn both in theory and via practice. Secondly, GROW introduces a model which provides an enabling space for the community to participate in volunteership. Volunteering in the initiative is incentivized by promoting the LGs as community open spaces that serve and welcome the community and their feedback. Furthermore, by welcoming children’s extended family and network from the surrounding community to participate in activities, the active citizenship skills taught in curricula are reinforced intergenerationally in the broader environment.

## 1.4 What climate- and environmental conditions do the partnership and/or the intervention need to respond to? And how have the partners responded to it?

Environmental issues in Lebanon– resulting from poor public infrastructure and weak laws preventing degradation- include pollution of water (i.e. rivers, groundwater, and coastal waters), air (i.e. inefficient and pollutive energy sector), mismanagement of natural resources (i.e. deforestation and quarrying), and lack of public infrastructure (i.e. wastewater treatment plants). Jibal and BZJ are working to bring awareness and corrective action to these environmental challenges by spreading actionable knowledge at the nexus of environmental challenges and social justice. The proposed intervention focuses on involving the future generation of leaders in education on ecologically-sound practices and environmental justice. In the gardens, the children will learn about human impacts on the environment and how to actively counter this. We prioritize building capacity locally (e.g. local trainers and volunteers) - this has several benefits amongst other minimizing car transportation. The previous intervention showed great success in supervision taking place via phone calls. The local focus also ensures endogenously-developed ownership in the communities, strengthened through activities such as communal waste collection. Building on great experience with online meetings across Denmark and Lebanon during COVID-19, Zaher will reduce visits to Lebanon to one, with two representatives using a direct flight route and staying at the BZJ farm.

# 2. The partnership/collaborators

## 2.1 Experiences, capacities and resources of participant partners

**Jibal** is a non-profit organization founded in Lebanon in 2017. They promote sustainability in all its aspects – built and natural environments, human societies, and economic and social policies. They explore – via research & applied projects– the nexus between social & environmental justice, pedagogy and active citizenship. They work to provide/develop actionable & contextually-relevant knowledge/curricula centering around environmental justice - experience and resources exactly relevant to this project. Jibal has experienced rapid growth in recent years, taking on larger projects related to achieving food justice as well as the development of environmental justice curricula development. Their experience with educational workshops and capacity building programs for both adults and children around these topics offers pedagogical expertise and resources needed to reach GROW’s educational objectives.

**GZ** is a recently established community farm, building on sustainable agriculture and education provision experiences of collaborators. They have been attending knowledge sharing workshops hosted by BZJ and Jibal for the past year in an effort to emulate the successful aspects of their work and learn from their challenges. Their mission seeks to include education components as

core aspects of their farm.

**BJZ** is a Lebanese NGO working for the preservation and diffusion of heirloom seeds and farming knowledge on organic agriculture in the Middle-East, particularly in Lebanon. The core of BJZ’s work is to run a school-farm in Saadnayel (Bekaa Valley) experimenting with agro-ecological farming practices in the Middle East climate and with natural preparations for organic agriculture. The farm includes vegetables, trees, aromatic plants, bees, sheeps, chickens and goats. BJZ further supports projects of ecological farming in communities and refugee camps in the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon. From running a LG for children at their school-farm for two years (supported by Zaher), BZJ possesses vital experiential data on the application of workshops in a farm space and a number of relevant curricular themes.

 **Zaher**, a Danish NGO with a mission to support local actors in Lebanon in creating LGs with stigmatised children residing in Lebanon. Zaher was established in 2016 as the outcome of discussions with local actors in Lebanon around needs, and has since supported one pilot- and several small scale projects with a number of local partners in Lebanon. Zaher always supports localized bottom up approaches, in which the LGs unfold from local needs and local ownership. Zaher has great experience with facilitating collaborations, networks and knowledge sharing in Lebanon and between Lebanon and Denmark, which will be of value and support the objectives of the local intervention.

## 2.2 Previous acquaintance or cooperation between the partners, and how these experiences have fed into the development of the proposed intervention.

The consortium is well-acquainted and has collaborated on several occasions in the past. In 2017 - 2019, Zaher and BJZ collaborated in setting their visions with LGs, identifying needs, and testing small-scale children's learning gardens in Lebanon. The CISU support in 2019 gave the partnership an opportunity for scaling up, where BZJ experienced a need for robust pedagogical skills to offer a qualitative workshop program for children. To meet this need, we hired Jibal to build local capacity via training of trainers (ToTs), develop workshop approaches, and facilitate knowledge sharing across partners. This collaborative synergy experienced between Zaher, Jibal and BJZ has been built in other projects. Jibal’s competencies are rare in Lebanon and are a huge resource to ensure the success and continuity of the LGs. Through previous interventions, Jibal has proved its sufficient capacity and engagement to lead the proposed project and the continued growth of LGs in Lebanon - what BZJ and Zaher have been looking for. Through several online meetings, the consortium discussed the evaluation of the 2019 - 2020 intervention as well as our previous experiences and cooperation which led to the design of the proposed project.

## 2.3 Describe the contributions, roles and responsibilities of the partners and other actores

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Partner** | **Roles and responsibilities** |
| Jibal | (1) local lead partner, appointing a local project manager to handle administration and logistics,(2) creating a robust capacity building programme for trainers from Ghoussoun and BZJ farms,(3) supporting Ghoussoun farm to design, develop, and cultivate a plot into a LG (4) leading the development of a curriculum with practical and theoretical workshops(5) responsible for assessing the changes of the LGs on the beneficiaries and communities through data collection to monitor outputs along the way (see pt. 3.5)(6) creating awareness and network around the published open source material |
| BZJ | (1) appointing a local coordinator in the farm,(2) upgrading their LG with educational installations, (3) conducting workshops implementing the curriculum and methods developed by Jibal,(4) supporting the curriculum development by sharing experiences with Jibal(5) participating in ongoing monitoring of the intervention to assess outputs |
| Jibal and BZJ | (1) recruiting local trainers and children following the target group description(2) involving the local community(3) handling own logistics according to the budget |
| Zaher | (1) responsible for the overall administration between Denmark and Lebanon according to the CISU requirements and for any needed contact with CISU,(2) monitoring the overall project and budget through consistent dialogue with local partners,(3) sharing information and facilitate knowledge sharing between Denmark and Lebanon,(4) evaluating on objectives and expected outputs |

*Justification of payrolls:* The previous intervention lacked resources for local management causing delays, complications, and overwork. Despite the best intentions of Zaher’s volunteers, it was not possible to reach the full potential of the project based solely on volunteer labour. We budget payroll for a local manager to dedicate 9 days/month for daily logistics and coordination and for a local accountant to dedicate 4 days/ month for local financial handling. Two volunteers from Zaher (with extensive experience in project subject matter and local partnerships) will be paid to dedicate 8 paid hours/month to the project outcomes.

## 2.4 The interventions’ contribution to the relationship and collaboration between the partners

Through consistently sharing experiences, ideas and resources across the two garden, Jibal can synthesize best practices from BZJ’s experience with transforming a part of their farm into an educational space for children and their experience with LG education, whereas BZJ will benefit from Jibal’s experience with eco-pedagogy, their experience with writing curricula and researching innovative alternative educational practices, inclusive and experiential. This will strengthen the corporations’ ability to qualify each one's activities and to initially make the approaches and resources available to more people through their networks, e.g. support the continuation of the LGs from the previous intervention. The transmission of knowledge from one side of the country to another, very different by all means, with Jibal’s help and coordination, will be a milestone in Lebanon’s young history of agroecology and community based agriculture. As both pillars in the “regenerative network” in Lebanon, GROW will strengthen the network at a national level as the two organizations integrate their work even further.

# 3. Target groups, objectives and expected outcomes

## 3.1 Describe the primary and secondary target groups

*Target groups are divided into Primary (P) and Secondary (S)*

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| --- | --- |
| **Target group** | **Description** |
| Children **(P)** | 60 children ages 6-14 (mixed gender) living in proximity to the respective farms, amongst them both Lebanese and displaced Syrians and Palestinian children* BZJ: 30 children involved in the previous intervention will continue in this one - all part of the Syrian refugee community, enrolled in little to non schooling
* GZ: 30 local children (spread in two groups of 15), outreached via the existing network of GZ members and involve Lebanese children from the immediate surrounding, and Palestinian and Syrian children from nearby camps
 |
| Direct community **(P)** |  35 in total (mix of gender, age groups and Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian)* 30 individuals in the direct social networks of children involved in LG activities (i.e. family members and neighbours) - 20 in GZ farm and 10 in BZJ
* 5 engaged volunteers to be selected (3 in GZ and 2 in BZJ)
 |
| Local School Community **(P)** | 120 children and 4 teachers from public schools or non-formal learning centers (mix of gender, age groups, and nationalities)* GZ farm will invite 2 groups of 20 children for field trips (40 in total) and 2 teachers to accompany them.
* BZJ will invite 2 groups of 40 children for field trips (80 in total) and 2 teachers to accompany them.
 |
| Instructors/trainers **(P)** | 10 people. Capacity building to 6 LG instructors (2 from BZJ & 4 from GZ) on curricula and pedagogical approaches. Priority will be given to local instructors who pledge a long term presence at the farm. Up to 6 external local actors are invited to participate (i.e educators and project and school leaders from local public schools and NGOs). |
| Stakeholders **(P)** | 30 relevant stakeholders which include public or private school teachers, educational NGO representatives, policymakers, interested landowners (i.e. persons interested to convert their land into an LG), project designers, etc.  |
| Extended community **(S)** |  200 community members living near LG space (130 in GZ farm and 70 in BZJ), (mixed background, all ages) |
| Online community **(S)** | Up to 300 Online followers. This includes people who have already collaborated, engaged and followed the works of the local partners. |

**3.2 Describe how the target groups will participate in- and benefit from the intervention** Children**:** The previous intervention showed how long term engagement is necessary as it allowed the children to create a connection with the LG space and instructors as well develop a sense of collective ownership of the space. For this reason, children will be welcomed to the space over the course of one year to engage in weekly learning experiences. LGs and their dynamic outdoor classrooms have internationally proven to offer mental well-being and opportunities for active participation in community-building. These skills mentioned are especially important for the underprivileged children this intervention seeks to reach, as they will gain enhanced general education, decision-making skills and actionable knowledge as well as the pro-social, pro-environmental, and health benefits associated with outdoor education.

Direct Community (P): As shown in a previous intervention, local community engagement in the LG contributed to an enabling environment for the continuity of the initiative (i.e. the involvement of engaged volunteers / hosting community shared meals). The direct community will be invited for monthly gatherings which allow them to learn about, contribute to & actively engage with the LG spaces via volunteership opportunities, food gatherings, and other on-farm activities. This will ensure that the direct community can achieve local ownership of space as well as solidify their commitment to LGs, and by extension, support their children’s involvement.

Local School Community: Groups of students & teachers from local public schools or non formal education centers will be invited for field trips where they can gain exposure to the benefits of LG spaces and build ongoing partnerships with the two farms.

Instructors/Trainers:There is a general lack of local people equipped with both sustainable farming knowledge and pedagogical skills. By building the capacity of and supervising local partners, this project seeks to connect and nurture these two skills, building long-lasting local capacity.

Stakeholders:To increase dialogue in Lebanon about future LG initiatives and establish the two farms’ roles as LGs models, we will create an advisory board of 6 people to take part in qualifying

activities, and later invite 30 people for a public launch event.

Extended Community: We saw in the previous intervention how people living around the LGs indirectly benefited from these. This intervention seeks to enhance how this group use the LGs as community meeting places, leisurely green spaces, and opportunities for learning and exchange.

Online community: By disseminating the curricula and LG model online for open access, we extend our project materials & findings to benefit the broader online community. Sharing of materials online via partners’ websites and social media allows more accessibility to content and greater opportunity for building international partnerships.

**3.3 Describe the objectives and expected results**

Overall objective Nurturing active citizenship in underprivileged children & youth in Lebanon through educational approaches in learning gardens which place environmental and social justice at the center – in support and supplement of the national educational system.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Outcomes** |
| Conducting a detailed risk analysis & continuity study plan for LGs | Baseline study and final evaluation conducted | Increased capacity and resources for our local partners |
| Equipping both garden spaces with education supporting enhancements | Two farms equipped with spaces that function as LG |
| Facilitating a trainer capacity building programme | The capacity of 10 trainers is built on the usage of dynamic pedagogical approaches |
| Conducting 108 workshops | 60 children from the two communities gain actionable knowledge on environmental & social justice.  | Underprivileged children gain a sense of ownership over LG space. Underprivileged children gain active citizenship skills.Stronger community involvement and engagement. |
| Providing both LGs with workshop material and tools |
| Developing a Sequential LG curriculum |
| Holding monthly gatherings | 35 direct community members (i.e. close family members & neighbors of children) will gather in the LG spaces for communal activities / shared meals  |
| Holding 4 field trip events | 124 members of the local school communities gains exposure to LG.  |
| Conducting 3 development workshops | LG partnership between Jibal and BZJ solidified | Improved process of LG establishment in Lebanon |
| Publishing LG curriculum and designs for replicable LG model | Full LG curriculum covering Environmental and Social Justice as well as Sustainable farming, made open access |
| A replicable sustainability model for LGs provided as open access in Lebanon |
| Conducting a final qualitative evaluation | Analysis of impact, successes and challenges faced by each partner during the intervention |
| Holding a 1 public launch event for sharing LG model | Established network of engaged stakeholders.  |

## 3.4 What is the strategy of the intervention?

*Description of activities*

Conducting a detailed risk analysis & continuity plan as baseline to ensure continuity of the two LGs developed under GROW. The consortium has already conducted evaluations of past LG projects in Lebanon (see 2.2). We plan to build on this work by producing a study which assesses & mitigates potential threats to the success of the LGs (e.g. field fires, community rejection of project, or bad management). This will require knowledge exchanges between BZJ & GZ and exploratory surveys with nearby communities.
Equipping both garden spaces with education supporting enhancements While the project focus is primarily on the provision of learning activities, the physical aspects of a LG space cannot be neglected as they directly contribute to the feasibility and continuity of the initiative. Building on the previous intervention, BZJ is already equipped with: a dedicated outdoor learning area[[9]](#footnote-9), separate water tank for irrigation[[10]](#footnote-10), small “child-sized” compost bin made out of recycled palettes[[11]](#footnote-11), a few sets of garden tools for children, a low-cost compost toilet, and a back-up indoor classroom for bad weather days equipped with a whiteboard & a projector, including has access to seeds for planting and perennial plants and trees[[12]](#footnote-12). Only minor enhancements such as plant labels, signage, and walking pathways will be made. GZ farm will emulate BZJ’s cost-effective space set-up and will require pathways, signage, plant labels, shaded outdoor education space, irrigation system, and tanks for the kids garden zone.

Facilitating a Training of Trainers programme for all the trainers from both farms. The programme will consist of 2x2 days training at the BJZ farm, at the beginning of each cycle + 6 half day training and supervision during the year. Jibal will conduct these pedagogical training workshops which will cover methods for learner-centered & experiential approaches to teaching as well as the ways in which environmental & social justice can be at the core of learning. These methods highlight empathy, justice, equality, and decision-making as opposed to traditional fact-based education, allowing room for critical thinking and problem-solving.

Conducting 108 workshops - 72 in GZ (2/week) and 36 in BZJ (1/week). These workshops will be conducted in 2 phases of 4-month cycles (Aug-Nov 2021 + Apr-Jul 2022). 36 intermediate & advanced workshops will be hosted at BZJ while 72 beginner and intermediate workshops will be hosted at GZ. All groups will begin with ice-breaking activities & provide a review (in the case of BZJ) or initial provision (in the case of GZ) of more basic workshops for the participating children/youth (and their respective families/parents). Budget is set aside for the inclusion of outings/field trips outside of the gardens as well as the invitation of external experts to give specified workshops (e.g. benefits of community farming, empowerment of community residents or learning through theater).

Providing both LGs with workshop material and tools for facilitation of the LG curriculum being developed.
Developing a Sequential LG curriculum (beginner, intermediate, advanced) utilising the complementary expertise and existing workshops of various partners, such as BZJ on sustainable farming, Jibal on subjects covering environmental education, as well as environmental and social justice and external relevant partners. All learning materials adopt a dynamic, experiential, and learner-centered approach, and are in line with the broader objectives of LGs. The 3 levels will accommodate age & experience levels.

Holding monthly gatherings: For stronger community engagement, each LG spaces will organize collective activities (ie. shared meals, focus themed discussions, collective harvesting) with the family members of children, neighbors of the farm, and engaged volunteers to foster community involvement.
Hosting 4 field trip events (2 in each location) for local public schools or non formal education (NFE) centers where both students and their accompanying school representatives (i.e. teachers) can be engaged in LG model. These events facilitate the development of a long term partnership between local schools/NFE centers & the two farms– this way even after GROW ends, visits to the LGs can occur.
Conducting 3 development workshops between the partners Jibal and BZJ, to support the development of the LG curricula and the replicable LG model: one workshop initiating the project, one between the two workshop cycles and one during the finalizing of the material. An advisory board will be invited to participate in the second and third (e.g. actors from the Learning Garden Network and educational sector).

Publishing LG curriculum and replicable LG model: All materials developed over the duration of this project– including continuity and risk analysis study, finalized curricula, and pedagogical tools– will be compiled into a booklet and made open access on consortium members’ websites and social media.
Conducting a final qualitative evaluation to assess impact, successes and challenges faced by each partner at every phase of the project, compiled into a final report for future interventions.
Holding a public launch event for sharing open source material with up to 30 stakeholders (described in pt 3 “Target group”) where findings, challenges, successes, and materials of the LG model will be presented.

## 3.5 Plans for systematizing experiences along the way and at the end of the intervention

*Systematizing experiences is relevant to the intervention’s objectives and will take place on several levels:*

1. Between local partners LG Space Installation & Curriculum Development process will include direct in-person exchanges through virtual meetings with documentation of notes shared in a database for all partners to access (see section 3.4). A review of meeting notes will be conducted by the local manager to ensure challenges faced are addressed appropriately ongoingly during the workshop implementation.
2. Between local partners and Zaher Kick-off meeting to discuss systematization of communication and experiences. Bi-weekly communication for status updates and quarterly data collection as well as financial check-ins over the course of the project on video call. To assess impact, Zaher and Jibal will gather qualitative field-data using the Most Significant Change method. Both have extensive experiences with this to support the work. The principles of ethical storytelling will guide the methodology to be sensitive to the target group and their contexts. Zaher and Jibal will co-design the evaluation plan with Jibal who will lead the data collection locally. Experience shows that Zaher does not need to be present at every local knowledge sharing activity. Receiving recordings from the meetings and translating them supports Zaher’s understanding of the developments in the intervention.
3. Between Zaher and CISU Zaher will consult CISU along the way and be in charge of the final evaluation.

Software to support the work:

* The online software Podio will be used to register details around each project activity (e.g. number of participants, themes of the workshops, challenges, etc). Podio has previously been used by the local coordinators with great success, as a template can be filled out directly in a smartphone app.
* A common WhatsApp group will be created to share pictures and immediate questions and needs. The local coordinators will support children and teachers in making small videos of their experiences in the gardens and interview each other and share on WhatsApp.
* Group meetings on Google Meet/Zoom allows more people to access as they consume less data.
* Qualitative field-data will be obtained by Zaher and Jibal and shared in a Google Drive folder.

Systematizing Process Timeline

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Jibal and BZJ | Zaher, Jibal and BZJ |
| July2021 | - Analysis and continuity study plan as baseline for LG- 1st development workshop (one-day offline) to share knowledge and experience (workshop plans, examples of content, material used quarterly) to initiate LG curricula building and LG space installation | -Kick-off meeting (one-day online): Align plans and roles for systematization of experiences and make a ToR. Discuss progress of activities, expected results and overall objectives |
| January2022 | - 2nd development workshop (one-day offline): Knowledge-sharing and building curricula- Focus group (half-day offline, Jibal only) with trainers and local coordinators on preliminary results, outcomes and potential changes- Interviews with children on change stories (Jibal only) | -Mid-term partnership evaluation (half-day online) to discuss initial findings and plan for cycle 2, preliminary results, outcomes and potential changes |
| August2022 | -3rd development workshop (one-day offline) -Focus group (half-day offline, Jibal only) with trainers and local coordinators on results and outcomes-Interviews with children on change stories (Jibal only) | -Final partner partnership evaluation (one-day offline) to evaluate the systemized experiences |

# 4. Intervention-related information work in Denmark

Zaher will share news & updates from the LG project on their webpage ([www.zaher.dk](http://www.zaher.dk)), newsletters, Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/zahergrowtolearn/>) and Instagram account (@zaher\_growtolearn). Over 50 people receive the newsletter quarterly, and Zaher’s Facebook and IG posts frequently reach between 500-1000 people. Zaher aims to co-host talks & workshops for a broader audience, such as at the Tomorrow Festival and Folkemødet, in which we engage in conversations around the necessity for LGs, in a Danish as well as in a Lebanese context, Global South-Global North partnerships, social justice, biodiversity, climate changes and the right for education. Zaher are in contact with several relevant Danish partners for 2021 who focus on a green and sustainable future with an aspect of social inclusion and coherence. The well established Danish NGO Haver til Maver (HtM) will continue supervising Zaher on a strategic level while sharing information and news about Zaher on their webpage, Facebook, digital and printed newsletter (distributed to more than 65.000 people in Denmark). The Danish green think tank, Gro Selv (with 5500 followers on Facebook and 3200 on Instagram) has agreed to co-host an event with live interviews and guided tours in the LGs with our local partners so they can share their experiences and inspire fruitful conversations around the impact and importance of LGs and other environmental related topics.

# 5. Supplementary financing

The rent for the plot of land in Saadnayel is secured by a yearly donation from a private sponsor. The local community has ensured funding to some of GZ’s space installations thanks to private donations mostly from the Lebanese diaspora abroad. Planned activities together with the NGO GroSelv will partly be supported by internal funds from GroSelv and an economic contribution received from Græsrodsfonden which was secured before the submission of this application.

1. More than half of Syrian children in Lebanon ages 3-18 years old are not enrolled in any schooling (see unhcr.org/lb/education) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. (Rutgers 2013; Soga, Gaston and Yamaura, 2017; Ohly et al., 2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Learning gardens as a tool for Development in Lebanon” in 2019 - 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The garden spaces in Malaak’s and Actions Aid’s educational centers had to remain closed through the entire COVID-19 period, whereas the learning garden in Saadneyel, due the fact that the LG was situated at a farm, could open and close following the lock downs. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian refugees in Lebanon by UNHCR [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www3.compareyourcountry.org/states-of-fragility/overview/0/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/4/8/hsbc-wells-fargo-cut-ties-with-lebanons-central-bank-report [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Wallin, Annie. "More Time Spent Engaged in Nature Play During Early Childhood May Lead to Life-Long Pro-Environmental Orientation and Behavior." and Lam, Ching Man. "Prosocial involvement as a positive youth development construct: A conceptual review." *The Scientific World Journal* 2012 (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This outdoor learning area is a small plot fenced with bamboo sticks. Buzuruna Juzuruna found that dedicating a small plot that children/youth develop themselves allowed for more ownership over the learning garden & more engagement in learning process. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This separate irrigation tank ensured that the farm’s complex irrigation system would not be tampered with by children/youth. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Allows children to take more ownership over composting process (i.e. bringing kitchen waste from home & putting it in their own dedicated bin) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Inclusion of perennial plants is more ecologically-sound and perennials allow children to observe growth [↑](#footnote-ref-12)