

HMG independent monitoring programme

Report for Syria Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) – Agricultural Livelihoods Support in Syria

Syria

Reporting period – Second Monitoring Round – Ciheam Bari

About IMPACT

IMPACT Initiatives is a Geneva based think-and-do-tank, created in 2010. IMPACT operates with operational support from its sister organisation ACTED.

IMPACT's teams implement assessment, monitoring & evaluation and organisational capacity-building programmes in direct partnership with aid actors or through its inter-agency initiatives, REACH and Agora. Headquartered in Geneva, IMPACT has an established field presence in over 19 countries. IMPACT's team is composed of over 400 staff, including 100 full-time international experts, as well as a roster of consultants, who are currently implementing over 50 programmes across Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Central and South-East Asia, and Eastern Europe.

Executive Summary

Upon request from Her Majesty's Government (HMG) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, IMPACT Initiatives has monitored the HMG-funded 'Support to Agricultural Livelihoods Programme', which seeks to sustain agriculture and livestock production, increase community resilience in opposition-held areas, and sustain ties between communities and Local Councils to increase trust and foster inclusive governance structures.

As a component of the Support to Agriculture Livelihoods Programme, Ciheam Bari supports Rural Women Associations that produce processed agricultural goods. Ciheam Bari provides financial and technical support that are designed to increase female participation along the food supply chain. Ciheam Bari supports one Rural Women Association based in Ma'arrat Tamasrin (Idlib Governorate) and one based in Afrin (Aleppo Governorate). This monitoring exercise focused on the Association in Ma'arrat Tamasrin (Idlib Governorate).

The purpose of the monitoring was to independently collect and analyse data to improve understanding of the decision-making processes employed by the Association for organising their internal affairs and outputs, as well as the socio-economic benefits of the Association's activities for its members. In particular, the monitoring examined how Association members made and implemented decisions; whether participatory decision-making has helped members build ownership of the association; and how the Association assisted women in addressing their livelihood needs.

One-to-one Key Informant Interviews were conducted with (i) Members of the Association (current workers), (ii) Members of the Association (non-workers, i.e. not current workers and not members of the Executive Board), (iii) Members of the Association (Executive Board), and (iv) Local Council Members in Ma'arrat Tamasrin.

Findings indicate that decisions on the creation and implementation of the worker rotation system,¹ as well as decisions on product lines, were made in a participative manner involving Association members. Ideas and decisions were discussed among Association members during regular meetings and then voted upon. To select which members to include in the worker rotation system, each applicant's needs and vulnerability level (e.g. disabled husband) was assessed during a meeting attended by Association members. Similarly, findings indicate that Association members were able to raise ideas on product lines, which were then discussed and approved through majority voting during Association meetings. Product lines were reportedly selected based on factors such as production cost and market demand.

Key Informants (KIs) reported that the Association treated everyone fairly and equally with no favouritism. KIs mentioned that all members were able to provide suggestions and influence the decision-making process, increasing their sense of ownership within the Association. KIs perceived that key aspects and procedures of the Association such as its management training, the participatory discussions encouraged during regular Association meetings, and the president's fair treatment towards all members as helpful in creating a positive environment for participatory decision-making.

Finally, the Association's activities addressed its members' livelihood needs in varying degrees. For workers, although salaries earned were not enough to cover all their basic needs, it supplemented their family income and workers were able to ease some of their financial pressure, such as in paying off previous debts. Worker KIs reported that they earned 5,000 to 7,000 Syrian Pounds (SYP) per week, which varied depending on the amount of profit earned. The Association worker's monthly income is estimated to be around 31.4 to 44.1% of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket for Northwest Syria in October 2017.² Workers were also able to purchase dairy

¹ The Women Association operates using a worker rotation system. As there was a higher number of Association members that wanted to be a worker than the number of vacant positions available, 20 Association members were selected to be Association workers at the beginning of each year. Ten of the selected workers work for the first six months, and the remaining 10 workers work in the remaining six months.

² A Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a six-person Syrian household for a month. In October 2017, the SMEB for Northwest Syria is 63,545 SYP per month (15,886 SYP per week). See Annex II for items counted in the SMEB. Source: Syria Market Monitoring Exercise October 2017.

products from the Association at production cost. All members, including workers, non-workers and Executive Board members, were able to benefit from the training provided through the Association. Some KIs reported that (i) the Association's training was useful in improving their skills, (ii) the certification of their training to improved their employability and, (iii) an expansion of their social network through the Association was useful in increasing their employment opportunities, e.g. being referred to attend job interviews. However, others noted that despite being able to benefit from improved skills and expanded social network through the Association's activities, there was no increase in livelihood opportunities yet as a result of joining the Association.³ Therefore, the extent to which indirect or non-financial benefits such as training led to a concrete improvement in livelihoods for non-workers and Executive Board members should be further explored.

³ No further information provided to explain why KIs reported that they did not have the opportunity to improve their livelihoods yet.

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Geographic Classifications

Governorate:	Highest form of governance below the national level
District:	Highest form of governance below governorate level
Sub-district:	Highest form of governance below district level
Community:	Highest form of governance below sub-district level

Abbreviations and Acronyms

EB	Executive Board
HMG	Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
IP	Implementing Partner
KI	Key Infomant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LC	Local Council
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
SYP	Syrian Pounds
TPM	Third Party Monitoring

Introduction and Background

Upon request from Her Majesty's Government (HMG) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, IMPACT Initiatives (also referred to as IMPACT) has monitored the HMG-funded 'Support to Agricultural Livelihoods Programme' (hereby referred to as 'Ciheam Bari' programme), which seeks to sustain agriculture and livestock production, increase community resilience in opposition-held areas, and sustain ties between communities and Local Councils (LC) to increase trust and foster inclusive governance structures.

As a component of the Support to Agriculture Livelihoods Programme, Ciheam Bari supports Rural Women Associations that produce processed agricultural goods. Ciheam Bari's provision of financial and technical support are designed to increase female participation along the food supply chain. Ciheam Bari supports one Rural Women Association in Ma'arrat Tamasrin (Idlib Governorate) and one in Afrin (Aleppo Governorate). As requested by HMG, the monitoring exercise focused on the Association in Ma'arrat Tamasrin (Idlib Governorate).

The purpose of the monitoring⁴ was to independently collect and analyse data to improve understanding around the decision-making processes and effects (both intended and unintended) of the Association. In particular, it provided HMG with neutral and independent information on (i) the **decision-making processes** employed by the Association for organising its internal affairs and outputs, and (ii) the **socio-economic benefits** for Association members. The monitoring was not to establish whether impact has been achieved.⁵

The information collected through this exercise aims to identify intervention results and challenges related to the implementation of Ciheam Bari project activities. Additionally, collected information supports identification of project elements that require adjustments.

Monitoring exercises in Syria are challenging due to the insecure environment. Re-occurring access constraints require the Implementing Partner (IP) to coordinate contact between IMPACT monitors, the IP's field teams and beneficiary communities. Ensuring a safe environment where surveyed participants and surveying staff feel sufficiently secure and comfortable to share information that supports the monitoring process was a priority of this monitoring exercise.

Presentation of the project monitored

The Support to Agriculture Livelihoods Programme was launched by Ciheam Bari in March 2015. The main objectives of the programme are:

- To increase and improve agricultural production and enable agricultural activities in opposition-held areas by providing subsidised agricultural inputs to farmers, e.g. fertilisers, pesticides, seeds;
- To enhance national and sub-national governance whilst developing sustainable support to agriculture in communities in Idlib and Aleppo governorates;
- To allow local farmers to maintain and expand their livelihoods, fees paid by farmers for subsidised inputs are deposited into a revolving fund, which is used to purchase further inputs; thereby boosting the sustainability of the programme;

⁴ This report details findings from Monitoring Round 2 regarding the Rural Women Association under the Ciheam Bari programme. Monitoring Round 1 was conducted in January 2017 to assess the delivery and distribution of fertilisers, beneficiary selection and the development of projects under the Ciheam Bari programme more broadly.

⁵ IMPACT developed a set of indicators for each research question on the basis of project documents that HMG and Ciheam Bari shared with IMPACT during the inception phase as well as discussions held during this period. The draft was submitted to HMG and Ciheam Bari for comments. Based on these IMPACT produced a final version of the indicators (monitoring matrix), which was agreed on by the donor and Ciheam Bari at the end of the inception phase.

- To improve the moderate opposition's governance credibility in Syria, by enabling agricultural service delivery and promoting the access to agriculture in opposition-held areas.

Rural Women Associations

As a component of the Support to Agriculture Livelihoods Programme, Ciheam Bari supports two income generation activities for women's groups in Afrin (Aleppo Governorate) and Ma'arrat Tamasrin (Idlib Governorate).

In Afrin, food processing activities of dairy products were planned in collaboration with the Rural Women Association in Afrin. Yoghurt production started on 31 May 2016 with a successful opening ceremony. According to Ciheam Bari, the Association's yoghurt production earned a positive net income and the women started to earn money by the end of September 2016.

In Ma'arrat Tamasrin, a Rural Women Association (hereby referred to as "the Association") was constituted and had 175 members as of April 2017. Ciheam Bari provided financial and technical support at the beginning of the project, which included introduction sessions on how to run an Association using a bottom-up approach as well as English courses. Ciheam Bari, in collaboration with the Association, created an activity plan for food processing (dairy products). Additionally, technical assistance was provided through virtual classrooms on a needs-basis. These were designed to address specific issues and needs identified by the Association, such as food safety and dairy manufacturing procedures. According to Ciheam Bari, yoghurt production in Idlib started on 29 May 2016, and the Association started earning a positive net income after three months. In 2017, 20 female employees worked in the Association's factory⁶ and generated income for their families under the worker rotation system. The Association acts autonomously in its decisions on how to rotate its active workers to produce dairy products, how to price and market its products, and how to invest and share profits. In addition to activities relating to yoghurt production, the Association also conduct community activities such as visiting orphanages.

Methodology

The IMPACT monitoring exercise was designed in cooperation with HMG and Ciheam Bari. Its objective was to gauge the perception of key stakeholders on the decision-making processes employed by the Association for organising their internal affairs and outputs, as well as to monitor the socio-economic benefits for its members.

Relevant stakeholders interviewed in the Third Party Monitoring (TPM) included:

1. Members of the Association (current workers)
2. Members of the Association (non-workers, i.e. not current workers and not members of the Executive Board)
3. Members of the Association (Executive Board, including the president)
4. Local Council Members (in Ma'arrat Tamasrin)

Research questions (cf. Box 1), indicators and tools were designed in close collaboration between HMG, Ciheam Bari and IMPACT prior to the implementation of the TPM.

Box 1 – Research Questions

1. How do women make decisions in the Association and how are these implemented?
 - 1.1 How is the rotation system operated?
 - 1.2 How are new product lines decided?

⁶ According to LC KILs, the yoghurt factory was provided and rehabilitated by the LC.

- 1.3 How do they decide what products should be produced?
- 1.4 How is the profit shared and reinvested?

2. Has the participatory decision-making process helped the members build ownership of the Association?
3. How is the Association assisting women in addressing their livelihood needs?

Please see Annex 1 for more detailed information on research questions and indicators.

Sampling strategy

Key stakeholders were selected based on IMPACT's initial understanding of the different actors involved in the Association. Member workers, Member non-workers and Members of the Executive Board (EB) were selected to participate in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in order to represent different actors within the Association. LC members were also selected in order to understand their involvement in the Association's decision-making process.

Ciheam Bari provided IMPACT with a list of all workers and non-workers in the Association, out of which IMPACT randomly selected interviewees to participate in the KIIs. This sampling method was adopted to mitigate potential bias from IPs selecting KIs. EB members and LC members were selected by the IP. KIIs were conducted with previous LC members as the IP perceived that they have a greater level of knowledge of the Association compared to newly elected LC members.⁷

Geographic coverage and timeframe

Monitoring took place in Ma'arrat Tamasrin, Idlib governorate.⁸ In this location, IMPACT conducted one day of pilot monitoring on 20 September 2017. Two days of monitoring activities were then implemented on 26 and 27 September 2017. As no changes were made to the KI questions after the pilot, the pilot data was also included in the dataset.

Table 1. Number of KIIs conducted with stakeholders

Stakeholders interviewed	20 September 2017 (pilot)	26 September 2017 (monitoring day)	27 September 2017 (monitoring day)	Total KIIs conducted
Member workers	2	5	-	7
Member non-workers	2	-	5	7
Members of the Executive Board	1	-	3	4
Local Council members	1	3	-	4

⁷ Two LC KIIs were LC members from 1 January 2014 to 1 August 2016, one LC KI was a LC member from 1 January 2013 to 1 August 2017, and one LC KI (pilot) was a LC member from 3 May 2013 to 1 January 2016.

⁸ The Association in Afrin (Aleppo Governorate) was not monitored due to security reasons.

Map 1. Monitoring activities geographical scope



Female enumerators conducted KIIs with Association members (all female). This included Member workers, Member non-workers and Members of the EB. KIIs with LC members (all male) were conducted with a male enumerator.

To maintain anonymity, participants were attributed a code during the data analysis and reporting stage. KIIs were coded using ATLAS.ti, and analysed according to each research sub-question in the indicator matrix (see Annex I).

Challenges and Limitations

During the implementation of the monitoring, IMPACT field teams experienced some challenges related to remote management and the conflict in Syria:

- The volatile security situation in Afrin (Aleppo Governorate) meant that monitoring activities were only conducted to assess the Association in Ma'arrat Tamsrin (Idleb Governorate).
- There were ongoing security challenges during data collection in Idleb Governorate, though airstrikes did not directly affect the data collection sites.⁹ An ACTED Security Officer conducted close monitoring of the security situation, and provided security clearance before IMPACT's enumerators conducted monitoring activities.

⁹ On the first day of the monitoring activity the field team faced a rocket explosion 500 metres away from them on their way back from Ma'arrat Tamsrin to Idleb city. On the second day of the monitoring, Ma'arrat Tamsrin was exposed to unexpected airstrikes during the activity time, the enumerators were fortunately far away from the activity location.

Findings

Key Findings

Findings indicate that decisions on the rotation system and product lines were conducted through participatory decision-making within the Association. The design of the rotation system was proposed during an Association meeting, which was then voted upon by the Association members. When selecting workers, the situation of each applicant was discussed with all members in the Association and voted upon. Each applicant's needs and vulnerability level (e.g. disabled husband) were assessed during the meeting. Similarly, product lines were decided by Association members, through discussions (considering factors such as market demand and the availability of ingredients) and were then voted upon. Association members reported that five percent of profit earned were used for machine maintenance, and 95 percent of profit were used for worker salaries.¹⁰

KIs with all workers, non-workers and EB members reported that the Association treated everyone fairly and equally with no favouritism. Worker and non-worker KIs mentioned that all members were able to provide suggestions and influence the decision-making process, implying an increase in their sense of ownership within the Association. It can be suggested that key aspects of the Association's activities and procedures such as (i) management training, (ii) participatory approach of the Association, e.g. participatory discussions in regular Association meetings and (iii) the president's fair treatment towards all members contribute towards creating a positive environment for participatory decision-making.

Respondents stated that the Association's activities met their livelihood needs in varying degrees. Worker KIs reported that they earned 5,000 to 7,000 Syrian Pounds (SYP) per week, which varied depending on profit earned.¹¹ Although the salary earned was not enough to meet all their basic needs due to high prices, it was able to supplement the basic needs of their families. They were also able to purchase dairy products from the Association at production cost. For workers, non-workers and EB members, KIs reported that the English language, yoghurt making and management training improved their skills. Some respondents also perceived the certification of their training to improve their employability; and some KIs reported an expansion of their social network through the people that they meet in the Association, leading to indirect benefits such as being referred to attend job interviews. However, other non-workers and EB members noted that there was no increase in livelihood opportunities as a result of joining the Association. Therefore, the extent to which providing training to Association members - but not necessarily giving the opportunity for all members to be Association workers - can lead to a concrete livelihood improvement for non-workers and EB members should be further explored.. A quantitative survey would be helpful in gaining a more in-depth understanding of the Association's impact to its members and to verify the trends identified in this study.

Findings by Research Question

Research question 1. How do women make decisions in the Association and how are these implemented?

- 1.1 How is the rotation system operated?
- 1.2 How are new product lines decided?
- 1.3 How do they decide what products should be produced? ?

¹⁰ No further information on whether salaries earned were shared equally amongst workers or based on the number of hours worked.

¹¹ Worker salaries were not considered part of the production cost, but varied depending on the profit made. No further information on how the Association made the decision to adjust worker salaries depending on the amount of profit made.

1.4 How is the profit shared and reinvested?

Findings indicate that there were mechanisms in place to make decisions within the Association. Worker meetings were held once every two weeks, and non-worker meetings once every two months. Respondents reported that they participated in these meetings on a regular basis, although some might miss meetings due to other commitments such as the need to take care of their husband and/or children at home. In addition to conducting Association meetings in-person at the facility, discussions and at times voting also took place virtually in a Whatsapp group. Findings indicate that members (EB, non-workers and workers) were aware that there was a complaint box in place. In addition, respondents knew that they were able to discuss issues directly with the president. Members were not aware of any previous complaints made.

Additionally, findings suggest that inclusive participation was fostered within the Association. Respondents reported that they were able to raise their own ideas during meetings, which were then discussed and approved through majority voting. For example, the idea of purchasing new equipment was presented during a team meeting. The idea was selected through majority voting, which was then presented to management for approval. Respondents unanimously expressed that everyone was treated equally with no reports of favouritism. They felt that the decisions made by the Association, including the president, were fair, e.g. how the president dealt with complaints and misconduct.¹²

Selection of workers and rotation system

Since there were more members that wanted to be workers than the number of workers needed by the Association, a rotation system was implemented to divide the work.¹³ Findings indicate that there was a clear process in the operation of the rotation system. According to a worker KI, the rotation system was decided during a meeting between the members and the president. One of the proposed idea was to divide the workers into two groups, in which each group would work for six months consecutively. This idea was voted upon, approved and implemented.

According to KIs, a meeting was held to select the workers at the beginning of each year. This included (i) deciding how many workers were needed, and (ii) voting to select which members can be workers.¹⁴ The number of workers to include in the rotation system was based on the production line and market needs, e.g. a higher number of workers in the rotation system was needed when the Association was producing more. At the beginning of the year, 20 workers were selected; 10 of whom work in the first six months and the remaining 10 work in the next six months.¹⁵

Worker KIs reported that they had to submit an application to the president indicating their wish to be a worker in the Association. During a meeting attended by Association members, applications were assessed based on the situation of each applicant, and workers were then selected through majority voting. When asked about how workers were selected, all KIs referred to a **need-based criteria** where a combination of different factors were mentioned. This included if the person (i) has no income, (ii) is the breadwinner or only supporter of the family e.g. widow, divorced, disabled husband/children, detained husband; (iii) has chronic disease, and/or (iv) has a large family with a number of dependents to support. In addition, **practical reasons** such as whether the person is

¹² For example, according to a worker KI, “a worker missed work without an excuse more than once. She was given a warning to show up or justify her absences and later she was expelled for failing to do so. That decision [made by the Association’s president] was fair as she was warned more than once.” No further information on the types of decisions made by the Association’s president compared to decisions made by the Executive Board or rest of the Association.

¹³ KIs reported that the Association has diversified product lines. No further information on whether the Association was trying to expand production and whether production volumes have increased overtime.

¹⁴ A person must be an Association member before they can apply to be an Association worker. To be a member, the person submits an application, which is reviewed and approved by the president. As an Association member, the person can then submit an application to be an Association worker.

¹⁵ One KI mentioned that there are currently only seven workers as the other three withdrew for personal reasons. No further details were mentioned about whether the three positions were replaced.

“available to work” and “lives within Ma'arrat Tamasrin” were also mentioned. “Personal competence” was mentioned by one KI only. After workers were selected, the LC sent a team to directly verify the eligibility of the person through home visits.

KIs with workers indicated that they were aware of why they were selected, and verified the criteria above. For example, one worker KI mentioned that “...I have disabled children and my husband has an injury that prevents him from working, so I was accepted as a worker after they examined my situation”. Another mentioned that “I applied to be a worker as I am a widow and support four children, so my application was accepted because of my situation and all workers are chosen based on their situation and need.”

The non-worker KIs were able to provide a clear understanding of the criteria of how workers were selected, suggesting transparency in how workers were selected. One non-worker KI further mentioned that she did not want to be a worker partly “...because there are many members who are in a worse financial situation than I am.”¹⁶

Decisions on new product lines

Findings indicate that workers, non-workers and EB members were able to raise ideas on new product lines for the Association. As mentioned by a worker KI, “I propose a new idea by writing it on a paper and putting it in the Association box or I go to the Association center and propose it to the president.” Proposals were then discussed and approved through majority voting during Association meetings. For example, a worker KI reported that an Association worker proposed to start producing labneh as it was a product in demand. The Association president held a meeting to discuss the idea with all members, and the decision was made to start producing labneh after yoghurt. Another example included a non-worker KI who suggested to produce canned goods. This idea was rejected after discussion among Association members as they did not think it would be a popular product in the market.¹⁷

Decisions on what products to produce

Similarly, findings indicate that decisions on what to produce were made through discussions in Association meetings. KIs reported that decisions on the type of product as well as its price were considered through analysis of different criteria. Most notably, respondents indicated that it was based on the **availability of ingredients** and **market demand**, in which it must be “easy to sell” and able to make “good profit”. For example, one KI mentioned that “Currently we are producing yoghurt as it has higher demand than others. We decided on a period for producing and selling it. Last month we were making cheese as it had higher demand.” This suggests that the decision on the type of product produced was regularly assessed and adjusted based on market demand. In the KIs, no respondents elaborated on what mechanisms were in place to assess market demand, e.g. whether market demand was understood based on members’ general perception of market needs or based on a pre-established market monitoring mechanism. Further investigation can explore whether capacity building training on assessing market demand could be beneficial to the Association.

In addition, findings indicate that members were aware of the Association’s decisions on product pricing. When asked about how selling prices were determined in the Association, KIs reported that they were largely based on the **production cost**, such as the price of milk and diesel.¹⁸ KIs mentioned that the most significant factor was the

¹⁶ Perceived benefits of Association activities mentioned by the KIs include improved skills from training activities, expanded social networks, increased social status, etc. No further information on Association members’ motivation to join the Association.

¹⁷ The decision on new product lines were discussed and decided internally in Association meetings. KIs did not Ciheam Bari playing a role in providing market analysis support in the decision making process. No further information on considerations and evidence taken into account when making decisions on new product lines.

¹⁸ Labour was not considered as part of the production cost, and salaries varied depending on profit earned. Further details are explained in sections below.

price of milk, which “varied according to season” and depended on supply. The Association’s accountant was responsible for monitoring the daily price fluctuations of milk in order to adjust the selling price. In addition, a supervisor from the Association oversaw the price by approving the unit cost and market price.

Some KIs mentioned that the product must be “sold at an **acceptable price** for consumers”. This was perceived as the Association’s positive contribution to the wider community. LC members mentioned that the Association was able to “increase financial activity in the city”, and a worker KI mentioned that “The Association has catered for local market needs of dairy products that are...in good prices, which limited traders' manipulation of prices.”¹⁹ Overall, the emphasis on the production cost and the need to sell its products at an acceptable price suggest that the Association had less motive or ability to generate a higher profit margin to reinvest into the Association. Nevertheless, further investigation can explore whether training sessions on pricing strategies and methods of profit reinvestment might be topics of interest to the Association.

Sharing and reinvesting of profit

When asked about the Association’s profit investment, KIs (workers, non-workers and EB members) reported that five percent of the Association’s profit was dedicated to the “maintenance of factory machines and equipments”, and 75 percent of the Association’s profit was distributed as “worker salaries”. Some respondents mentioned that 20 percent was initially allocated for the “administration of the Association”,²⁰ which had been rediverted to pay for worker salaries.²¹ In other words, 95 percent of the profit was spent on worker salaries. Executive Board (EB) members and non-workers reportedly did not receive any share of the profit or other financial compensation for their involvement in the Association.²²

In addition, the Association’s president mentioned that “we have not made any investments due to slim profits.” This was echoed by other respondents who reported that no investments had been made as all profits²³ were spent on machine maintenance and worker salaries. However, some KIs provided examples of investments made from the Association’s profit. This included purchasing a fridge to store products, light equipment, and a kettle for milk. KIs also mentioned investments to diversify product lines. As mentioned by a KI, “there have been some investments made by the Association with the profits...when the factory was established there was only one product which is yoghurt but now the factory also produces cheese and labneh.” From the findings, it is unclear whether the spending mentioned (fridge, kettle, net for labneh, etc.) was counted as the five percent under “equipment and machine maintenance” by other respondents. Internal financial records would be helpful in verifying spending.

Finally, respondents reported that they were not aware of any Association funds.²⁴ This is possibly due to the fact that no or little profit was made to contribute to the Association Fund. It is also important to note that KIIs with LC

¹⁹ No further information on how the Association determined what was considered an acceptable selling price.

²⁰ No further information on what “the administration of the Association” entails, such as whether this refers to salaries for administrative staff and EB members or as profit shares for Association members.

²¹ Some KI respondents only reported that it is “for the administration of the Association” or “for Association members”, with no mention this amount has now been diverted to paying worker salaries. Therefore, it is not clear whether respondents were aware that the 20 percent was now spent to pay worker salaries instead of the administration of the Association.

²² No further information on how the current method of profit allocation was decided upon.

²³ Although KIs reported that ‘profit’ was spent on paying worker salaries and machine maintenance as outlined above, IMPACT notes that worker salaries and machine maintenance costs should usually be deducted from the Association’s revenue as part of its production costs, rather than be interpreted as a distribution of profit. This suggests a different interpretation of ‘revenue’ and ‘profit’ by the KIs, in which worker salaries and machine maintenance costs were not considered part of production costs. Worker KIs reported that their salaries varied depending on profit earned. Findings suggest that the Association had little or no profit to invest after deducting worker salaries and machine maintenance costs from the Association’s revenue.

²⁴ In Chapter IV Article 15 of the Rural Women Association Statute sent to IMPACT from Ciheam Bari, the Association Fund consists of “supporting organisations in establishment and initial fund”, “donations by cash and in-kind, aids and other resources” and “support from the Syrian interim government”. No further information is available on the Association Fund.

members indicate that they were not aware of the Association's decision-making processes on product lines and profit reinvestments. This suggests that decisions were made autonomously within the Association, and had little external involvement from the LC.²⁵

Research question 2: Has the participatory decision-making process helped the members build ownership of the Association?

Findings suggest that the participatory decision-making processes set up by the Association were effective in allowing its members to participate, contributing to their sense of ownership in the Association. First, the management training raised members' **awareness** and **knowledge** of the tools needed to participate in decision-making e.g. majority voting. These tools were effective in facilitating participation in a systematic and coherent manner within the Association. Second, members perceived that everyone was **treated fairly**, which might be conducive to making members feel that their voice was heard regardless of their position. However, indicators to measure whether members feel "ownership" of the Association can be further explored.

Training facilitates members' awareness and ability to participate

Findings indicate that the management training increased members' awareness of their ability to participate in the Association's decision-making. As one non-worker KI mentioned, which was echoed by other respondents, "Before the training I did not know how to make decisions and I thought that the president of the Association is the only authorised decision maker. After the training, I became aware that any decision is submitted to all members and is discussed and voted on and the majority of the views is adopted." A worker KI noted that "Before attending the sessions I used to think that I was supposed to work only but now I know that I can give my opinion and take part in the decision-making process." This suggests that the training encouraged active participation within the Association. It allowed members to collectively apply the same principles and tools learnt in the training, such as the "right to give my opinion" and to "vote in any decisions made", into the Association's operations.

Inclusive participation in decision-making in Association meetings

Findings suggest that workers, non-workers and EB members were all able to actively participate in the decision-making process. In addition to making decisions on the worker rotation system and product lines, KIs provided examples of how they made decisions on the Association's community activities.²⁶ With the exception of one worker KI who was new to the Association, all KIs were able to provide examples of how members introduced or influenced an idea during an Association meeting. Ideas were then discussed, voted upon, and approved. For example, a worker KI attended a meeting where someone suggested buying new equipment. This idea was agreed upon through majority voting, and then brought to management for approval.²⁷

There was also evidence that ideas were refined through discussion and exchange with others in the Association. For example, a non-worker KI reported that she influenced the decision by suggesting to conduct free courses with younger children, rather than with middle schoolers as initially suggested by another member. This idea was accepted by the group. Active participation can be indicative of members' sense of ownership in the Association.

KIs felt they were able to contribute their past experience and skills/competency to the group - rather than gain legitimacy to participate based on favouritism. As a non-worker KI mentioned, "...[in the Association meeting] I

²⁵ The LC reported that they support the Association by the provision and rehabilitation of the factory, as well as in direct verification of workers' eligibility through home visits.

²⁶ According to KIs, community activities were organised and implemented by the Women Association. They included activities such as visiting orphanages and giving them gifts.

²⁷ Note that some ideas were approved but not implemented due to the lack of funding. No further information on whether community activities were funded by the Association's profit or from other sources of funding.

presented my personal opinion of what the kindergarten would need in terms of equipment and necessities based on my experience and ability in voluntary work as I study in the education faculty and I specialise in working with young kids and my views were taken into consideration.”

Another non-worker KI mentioned that “...in the meeting...I will propose securing a place to teach young girls as I have a team of volunteers who would like to teach and assist as many students as possible.” This KI’s wish to bring external networks and resources into the Association can also be an indication of her sense of ownership in the Association. These examples suggest that in addition to involving members in decisions on dairy production (e.g. product line, rotation system), the Association’s community activities was also a key area that encouraged member participation and ownership in the Association.

Members perceive equal treatment within the Association

All KI respondents perceived that they were treated fairly and were able to participate as equals in the Association. For example, a worker KI reported that “Everyone is equal in terms of rights, duties, workload and wage.” Another worker mentioned that “The Association treats everyone equally and we are all united...It does not distinguish a member from another for any reason.” In addition, the perceived fairness can be associated with the participatory and democratic processes in place, where members felt consulted and that decision-making was transparent. A non-worker mentioned that “It treats all its members equally, as all members participate in decision-making and voting and as a result of that all decisions are fair”.

In addition to the Association’s participatory structure and approach, KIs attributed equal treatment to the president’s fairness and management ability. “The president of the Association listens to the full story and discusses it with the person him/herself and with the rest of the members if the person wants to and she tries hard to solve it or limit it at least.” Several KIs also attributed it to the fact that the president lives outside of the community with little favouritism. For example, a non-worker KI mentioned that “There is no preference as the president of the Association and the majority are from outside Maaret Tamsrin (meaning there is preferential treatment for relatives, of friends between the president and any worker who gets chosen) as it is the case in other associations.”

Therefore, findings suggest that the participatory mechanisms and procedures (e.g. management training, regular meetings, Association’s practice on majority voting, president’s equal treatment of all members) were implemented effectively. This fosters a positive and democratic environment to encourage active participation. It can be suggested that active participation and one’s sense of ownership in the Association are mutually reinforcing processes. Participation improves one’s sense of ownership - especially ownership of ideas that they have raised, influenced or voted upon, leading to further involvement within the Association. In this sense, findings suggest that the Association’s participatory decision-making contributed to the members’ sense of ownership to a large extent.

Research question 3: How is the Association assisting women in addressing their livelihood needs?
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Findings indicate that livelihood needs were addressed on different levels to certain extents. For workers, the provision of a job can meet their financial needs on a basic level. For non-workers, the Association’s activities facilitated them to address their livelihood needs in an indirect way. First, KIs reported that the English language, yoghurt making and management training improved their skills. Second, respondents perceived the certification of their training to improve their employability. Lastly, respondents reported an expansion of their social network through the people that they meet in the Association, leading to indirect benefits such as being referred to attend job interviews. However, worker KIs reported that the salaries they received were not enough to meet their basic needs. Non-workers and EB members also reported that they did not receive any salaries or share of the Association’s profit.

Worker salaries reduce dependency and contribute to basic needs

Worker KIs reported that they earned around 5,000 to 7,000 SYP per week (20,000 to 28,000 SYP per month), which fluctuated depending on profit.²⁸ The Association worker's monthly income is roughly 31.4 to 44.1% of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for Northwest Syria.²⁹

All five worker KIs interviewed reported that the salary received was not enough to cover all basic needs, but was able to contribute to their livelihood needs and improve their financial situation. Some livelihood improvements mentioned by worker KIs include being able to pay off some of their debt, not being dependent on aid assistance, and being able to meet the basic needs of their family (to a certain extent for some). As one worker KI mentioned, "After becoming a worker, I can afford buying some household items and buying some of the food and clothes that my children wish for...before I had to borrow money from relatives to provide my children's needs." In addition, workers mentioned that they can purchase dairy products from the Association at the production cost, which also relieves their financial costs.³⁰ Worker KIs reported that the worker salary was not enough to support their family, in which they had to rely on other sources of income, such as money from their relatives. Beyond meeting livelihood needs, findings reveal that being able to earn a living also had psychosocial benefits to workers, increasing their sense of confidence and autonomy in their families and within their communities. A worker KI mentioned "Before that, I used to live on donations. Being here [at the Association] made me feel myself and my independence...This got me out of my isolation and depression, and I am not a burden on anyone's shoulders." Others also reported gaining more respect from their husbands and families for being able to earn an income, such as a worker who mentioned that "I have social status in the eyes of my husband, children and family."³¹ People around me admire me for what I do for my family." Another worker KI mentioned benefiting from an improved social status within her community, in which "my self-esteem has improved, and the men and women in my community respect me more." In a society where women in employment are less common, it seems to suggest that the Association's employment of workers has been able to challenge norms and perceptions to a certain extent.³²

Training and social networks perceived to improve employability for some KIs

According to KIs, the Association offered English language training, management training and technical training (e.g. yoghurt making). A majority of KIs felt that the content, structure and location of the training were suitable. Respondents perceived that the **new skills** and **certification** they gain from the training was important in improving their opportunity in seeking employment. For example, a non-worker KI mentioned that "I am very hopeful to get a job soon after getting the certificate." Some KIs mentioned that they were now able to produce yoghurt at home for their family, reducing the cost from purchasing yoghurt elsewhere. In addition, the Association provided an opportunity for its members to develop a **wider social network**, increasing the chance of members being referred to job opportunities. For example, a worker KI perceived that that "these relations within and outside the Association with other organisations can help [me] find a job." Similarly, a non-worker KI mentioned that "...through knowing someone in an organisation, he helped me to apply for a job."

²⁸ No information on whether the salary was further adjusted based on the number of working hours.

²⁹ A SMEB represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a six-person Syrian household for a month. In October 2017, the SMEB for Northwest Syria is 63,545 SYP. See Annex II for items counted in the SMEB. Source: [Syria Market Monitoring Exercise October 2017](#).

³⁰ It is not clear from the data whether Association non-workers can also purchase dairy products at the production cost.

³¹ No KIs in IMPACT's TPM exercise mentioned increased disputes with their husband over the control of money or any other negative consequences as a result of women being the breadwinner of the household. Note that according to a study by CARE in 2016, women's work in Syria can lead to conflicts between a woman and her husband, who has been accustomed to being the sole family income provider. Women reported that some husbands disengage completely, casting all responsibility on their shoulders. KIs working with women in Syria also noted an increase in domestic violence, sometimes related to the new roles of wives in income-generation, the changing balance of power between the sexes, and the related feeling of emasculation in men.

³² No further information on male perspectives of women roles as breadwinner from IMPACT's TPM exercise.

However, some did not perceive the Association's activities as being able to meet their livelihood needs. For example, an EB KI mentioned that "The courses increased my knowledge and experience, but I have not had an increased access to livelihood opportunities." Another EB KI also echoed that "I benefited from my presence in the Association in all aspects except the financial one." This suggests that the perception of whether the Association's activities led to an improvement in livelihood opportunities were mixed. While it is evident that workers benefited from their salary, further investigation is needed to explore the extent to which non-workers and EB members have improved livelihoods as a result of the Association's activities.

Concluding Remarks

The TPM aimed to gather neutral and independent information to understand the decision-making processes employed within the Association, and the socio-economic benefits it has for its members. Findings suggest that a fair, transparent and participative mechanism was in place in the Association to make decisions such as selecting workers, and deciding on new product lines.

Findings indicate that there were transparent policies for the Association to make decisions on selecting workers in the rotation system, and in identifying product lines and selling prices. Key aspects of the Association such as (i) management training, (ii) participatory discussions within regular Association meetings held and (iii) the members' experience of fair treatment by the president contributed towards members' active participation and a sense of ownership within the Association. Members felt that they were treated fairly, and were able to provide recommendations and influence the Association's decision-making process.

The Association's activities also addressed livelihood needs to a certain extent. Worker KIs reported that their salaries enabled them to meet the basic needs of their families and they were also able to purchase dairy products from the Association at production cost. Non-workers and EB members reported having benefited from the Association's training, increasing their opportunity for employment. In addition, some KIs also perceived that the increase in social networks through involvement in the Association improved their likelihood to be referred to different jobs through the people that they meet. However, some members noted that there were "no financial benefits" from the Association. Therefore, the extent to which indirect or non-financial benefits such as obtaining a training certificate and an expanded social network led to concrete improvements in livelihoods should be explored. Employing a quantitative approach can further assess the extent to which the trends identified in this monitoring exercise are applicable across all members within the Association.

Perceived benefits for women

The Association's benefits to women were reflected in the findings. KIs reported an increase in confidence and an increase in social status among their families and wider community. As a non-worker KI suggested, "I have developed a social status among my neighbours and family and I get consulted in important matters, while I was marginalised with no opinion before joining the Association." A worker KI similarly indicated that "I [am] more respected by my husband and family, as I have become an effective member in the community." An EB of the Association mentioned that "I became a role model for women in particular." The women's ability to develop an opinion, participate in decision-making, be a breadwinner (for workers) and meet other female role models through the Association's activities all contribute to a better image of themselves and by others in the community.

In addition, some KIs reported that they felt isolated before, as they were displaced and/or only knew people from their family. KIs reported that participating in the Association allowed them to know a wider network of women from diverse backgrounds, strengthening their social support and contributing to an increase in social cohesion. For example, a worker KI mentioned that "I have made friends from different financial and educational backgrounds, poor, rich and educated. We exchange experiences when we deal with each other." Overall, KIs mentioned that they did not know any similar initiatives, which suggests that the Rural Women Association was a unique model

within the community. To further explore the role and impact of women-only initiatives within the community's socio-cultural context from a gendered perspective, it can be useful to interview men in the community. This can capture male perspectives of the Association's activities, such as any perceptual change in the role of women in earning income and in decision-making.

General suggestions for improving the programme³³

To improve and expand the Association's activities, a number of suggestions were identified by KIs, including:

- **Expanded educational activities and curriculum** with regards to **topic range** covered (e.g. nursing, psychosocial support, office programmes, social communications, computer, advanced English courses) and **course levels** (e.g. more comprehensive and detailed courses, to meet needs of members with different abilities).
- **Adjustments in training course arrangements**, e.g. repeating classes for those who did not attend, creating more room for participation during the course, inviting a trainer that speaks Arabic,³⁴ inviting a trainer that is present in person due to poor internet connections at times.
- **Expanded production and equipment** e.g. purchasing cows as a stable source of milk, having a place to sell its products, purchasing more advanced working equipment, having a bigger facility, establishing second line or a second branch of the factory to benefit a larger number of women, purchasing more laptops and installing solar panels.
- Salaries for all members and fixed salaries for workers.

Overall, the KIs conducted were useful in gaining an insight into the decision-making processes and in identifying the benefits of the Association's activities for its members and wider community. For further research, additional methodologies such as direct observation in Association meetings and quantitative surveys, as well as expanding the scope of the study to monitor the livelihood outcomes of its members, would be useful in further exploring the research questions identified.

³³ KIs did not specify whether suggestions for improvement refer to expectations of external support or internal plans for expansion. IMPACT notes that it is likely that KIs were referring to expectations of external support, as some KIs mentioned the need for continued financial support. KIs reported that some Association members' current ideas raised during team meetings were approved but not implemented due to the lack of funding. No further information on other constraints from implementing the activities listed.

³⁴ No further information on whether all or only some trainings were provided in English.

Annexes

Annex 1. Indicator matrix

Research questions	Category sub-questions	#	Sub-question	Questions asked in KI	Data collection method	Question type	Key disaggregations
-	0. socio-demographic info	0.1		How old are you?			i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board)
		0.2		What is your professional background?			ii. Members of the Association (workers)
		0.3	-	Are you currently 1. worker, 2. Executive Body member, 3. a member (no worker and no executive body member)? OR a local council member?			iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		0.4		yes, which?			iv. Local council members (0.1 - 0.3)
		0.5		Are you from Maaret Mistrin?			
1. What are the decision-making processes in the Association and how are these implemented?	1.1. Becoming a member, worker or executive body member	1.1.1	How do women become a member of the Association?	All: Can you describe how you became a member of the Association?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		1.1.2	How do Association members become Association workers?	Workers: Can you describe how you became a working member? If you have not become a working member yet, can you please explain why? Others: Can you describe how members of the Association have become workers?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body) iv. Local council members
				Local Council: Is there a verification process within the LC of the eligibility of women to become a worker? If yes how does it work? (What process to verify information provided by women)	KI	Qual	i. Local council members
		1.1.3	How do members become one of the 5 members of the Executive Body?	Executive body member: Can you please describe how you were selected to the Executive Body? Others: Can you please describe how the five members of the Executive Body were selected?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		1.1.4	How is the rotation system of workers operated?	Workers: Can you please describe how you have been rotated between placements? If you have not been rotated can you please explain why this is? Others: Can you please describe how the factory workers' rotation system was decided on?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)

Research questions	Category sub-questions	#	Sub-question	Questions asked in KII	Data collection method	Question type	Key disaggregations (Group types)
1. What are the decision-making processes in the Association and how are these implemented?	1.2 Decision-making on product lines and marketing	1.2.1	How often are meetings organized?	All: Can you please tell us how often Association meetings are organized? How often do you attend these meetings? If you have not attended all meetings, why did you miss some?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		1.2.2	What voting procedures that the Association employ?	All: Can you please describe what voting procedures are employed by the Association? Are there different procedures? Are you allowed to participate in all of them. If no, why not?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		1.2.3	How does the Association decide what products should be produced?	All: Can you please describe how the last product lines were decided upon?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		1.2.4	How do the members propose new ideas for goods to be produced?	All: Can you please propose how you would propose a new idea to the Association? Can you give examples of ideas proposed? Were they accepted?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		1.2.5	How do the members decide how to market produced goods?	All: Can you please describe how the Association decides to market the produced good?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)

Research questions	Category sub-questions	#	Sub-question	Questions asked in KI	Data collection method	Question type	Key disaggregations (Group types)
1. What are the decision-making processes in the Association and how are these implemented?	13 Decision-making on finances	13.1	How are profits shared and invested?	All: Can you please describe how profits are shared among Association members and how the Association decides about investment of profits? What investments have you observed?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Board)
		13.2	How do the members decide what the market price of the produced goods should be?	All: Can you please describe how the Association decides about the market price of produced goods?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Board)
		13.3	Are members aware of economic aspects of decisions made and have they acquired basic economic principles?	All: Can you describe the economic criteria used to decide which product is marketed or produced?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Board)
		13.4	Are members aware of the value of their labor?	All: Are you aware of the UNIT PRICE and the UNIT COST of the goods produced by the association? (Please respond mentioning what product/good you refer to – use an example)	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Board)
	14 Handling official complaints	14.1	What is the mechanism in place to address member dissatisfaction?	All: Can you please describe the mechanism to address members dissatisfaction?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Board)
	15 Handling official complaints	15.1	Is this mechanism efficient?	All: Have you used it or heard about someone who used it? If so, was a response provided to the complaint? By whom? Was the issue resolved?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Board)
	16 Overall perception of fairness	16.1	Are decisions are being made in a fair and just way?	All: Can you please describe whether you feel that the Association treats all members equally and that decisions are made in a fair and just way?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Board)

Research questions	Category sub-questions	#	Sub-question	Questions asked in KI	Data collection method	Question type	Key disaggregations (Group types)
2. Has the participatory decision-making process helped members build ownership of the Association?	2.1 Members perception of own influence within Association	2.1.1	How does the Association allow for active participation of all members= in decision-making processes?	All: Can you please describe how you have actively participated in decision-making processes to date?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		2.1.2	How is the Association seen as being different than similar initiatives in the area?	All: Have you been part of, or observed, initiatives similar to the Rural Women Association in the area you live in? If yes, please explain what is the difference you observe between these.	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		2.1.3	How does the Association ensure that members can influence decision-making processes and outcomes?	All: Can you please describe how you have influenced decision-making processes to date? Could you see concrete actions as a result? Please explain why yes or no.	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
Research questions	Category sub-questions	#	Sub-question	Questions asked in KI	Data collection method	Question type	Key disaggregations (Group types)
3. How is the Association assisting women in addressing their livelihood needs?	3.1 Perceived well-being and community status	3.1.1	How does the Association supports women in expanding their networks?	All: Can you please outline whether being a member of the Association has helped you to create new relations in your community?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		3.1.2	How does being a member of the Association contribute to the perceived well-being of individuals?	All: Can you please explain whether your overall well-being has increased ever since you joined the Association? If yes, can you explain how?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		3.1.3	Has being a member of the Association increased the social status of the member within her community?	All: Can you please outline how your social status in your community has changed ever since you joined the Association?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)

Research questions	Category sub-questions	#	Sub-question	Questions asked in KI	Data collection method	Question type	Key disaggregations (Group types)
3. How is the Association assisting women in addressing their livelihood needs?	3.2 Capacity building of new skills on labour market performance	3.2.1	Are technical assistance sessions/ virtual classrooms useful to improve the skill set of members?	All: Can you please describe the technical assistance sessions or virtual classrooms you have attended and which you found most useful and why? Were you able to apply this in your daily worklife? If yes, please provide examples.	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		3.2.2	Are technical assistance sessions/ virtual classrooms useful to improve decision making mechanisms within the association?	All: Can you please describe how the technical assistance sessions (specifically the one regarding "Association") has influenced internal decision making practice in the association? Please give an example of a change in the association that you have observed that has been linked to concepts/ideas discussed	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		3.2.3	Are technical assistance sessions/ virtual classrooms useful for members to also access new income opportunities outside the Association?	All: Can you please describe how the technical assistance sessions or virtual classrooms have helped you to access new income opportunities?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		3.2.4	Are technical assistance sessions/ virtual classrooms adapted to the operational context?	All: Would you say the training sessions were adequate to your context (e.g. In terms of timing, location, structure, length, language, terminologies used...)	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
		3.2.5	How can this technical assistance be improved?	All: What could be done to improve this technical assistance/virtual classes?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (Executive Body)
Research questions	Category sub-questions	#	Sub-question	Questions asked in KI	Data collection method	Question type	Key disaggregations (Group types)
3. How is the Association assisting women in addressing their livelihood needs?	3.3 Financial stability	3.3.1	Does the wage workers receive suffice to cover household needs?	Worker: Is the wage you receive sufficient for meeting your livelihood needs?	KI	Qual	i. Members of the Association (workers)
		3.3.2	Does the wage workers receive suffice to cover household needs?	Has your livelihood situation CHANGED ever since you become an Association worker? Please describe how and give examples of what contributed to this (improved - because food is less expensive or access to income, decreased - because needed to	KI	Qual	i. Members of the Association (workers)
	3.4 Association contribution to community well-being	3.4.1	How does KI perceive the contribution made by the Association to individual members and the community?	All: Could you please describe to what extent and how the Association supports the well-being of the community? Could you give an example?	KI	Qual	i. Member of the Association (not workers and not members of the Executive Board) ii. Members of the Association (workers) iii. Members of the Association (Executive Body) iv. Local Council Members

Annex 2. Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket Contents in Northwest Syria (October 2017 Market Monitoring)

SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB) CONTENTS

	Item	Quantity
Food Items	Bread	37 kg
	Bulgur	15 kg
	Chicken	6 kg
	Eggs	6 kg
	Fresh vegetables	12 kg
	Ghee/vegetable oil	7 kg/L
	Red lentils	15 kg
	Rice	19 kg
	Salt	1 kg
	Sugar	5 kg
	Tomato paste	6 kg
Non-Food Items	Bathing soap	12 bars
	Laundry/dish soap	3 kg
	Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
	Toothpaste	200 g
Fuel	Cooking fuel*	25 L
Water	Water	4500 L
Telecom	Smartphone data	1 GB
Other	Float (other costs)**	7.5% total value

* Kerosene in northern Syria; LPG in southern Syria.

** Float was excluded from SMEB calculations due to the commonality of incomplete baskets.