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Lebanon: Fig Holding

[**Lebanon: Fig Holding and SDG#1 No Poverty**]

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Introduction: Poverty in the Arab World

Poverty reduction is pivotal for sustainable development and has been identified as the first sustainability goal (SDG#1) by the United Nations. Poverty has remained a key challenge for countries in the Arab world, which is characterised by persisting levels of poverty and significant income inequalities, where the top 10% of people account for 64% of all wealth (Alvaredo et al., 2021). Arab states have undertaken diverse efforts to reduce poverty on national and regional levels to operationalise the 2030 Sustainability Agenda. Nevertheless, the achievements of objectives have been rendered difficult by numerous challenges such as ongoing regional conflicts, civil wars, political instabilities and refugee crises (mainly due to the Syrian war). Factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent Ukrainian war have also impacted food security and aggravated the poverty situation in the region (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia [UNESCWA], 2023). Insights regarding poverty in the region come from the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which is published by the United Nations Development Programme and measures factors of living conditions that affect family spending and poverty rates, such as health, education, and living standards (such as nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, sanitation, electricity, drinking water, and assets, among other factors). The MPI showed that in the aftermath of COVID-19, the Arab region experienced a significant household income loss with an extreme poverty rate of 11.3% in 2023 (UNESCWA, 2023). The pandemic has pushed eight million additional people into extreme poverty, and a total of 48 million individuals in the Arab world are now living below the poverty line (UNESCWA, 2023). The 2nd Arab multidimensional poverty report (UNESCWA, 2023) also states that the number of moderately poor people has reached 131 million of a total of 464 million inhabitants in 2023, which is an additional 22 million people compared with pre-COVID-19 times (UNESCWA, 2023). Different surveys converge in their findings that between 70% to 85% of families in non-oil-producing countries in the region have to borrow money or rely on some form of aid to cover their monthly needs, which renders them vulnerable and likely to slip into poverty (Khoury, 2019).

The present case is set in Lebanon, located in the Arab region. It describes and illustrates how Fig Holding, a family-run enterprise, has used its capabilities and resources to engage people in need and help alleviate poverty's effects on families and individuals in adverse conditions created by the economic crisis, especially after the Beirut port explosion. The case also shows how Fig Holding has transferred its knowledge to other contexts, notably Armenia, which was confronted with a refugee influx due to the military offensive in Nagorno Karabach in September 2023. The present case examines actions and initiatives adopted by a family business to achieve community engagement and support impoverished people and individuals in need during a crisis.

Fig Holding: products and services

Fig Holding is a portfolio company active in the culinary and hospitality industry, comprising restaurant and catering businesses around Armenian food and culture. Fig Holding consolidates different brands and business concepts all under one roof. Creating a holding company presented different advantages from an organisational perspective as it enabled the streamlining of management and provided a more cohesive approach to decision-making. It also allowed the business to share resources and expertise across its subsidiaries. Consolidating business activities under Fig Holding allowed the team to better centralise the control over the different existing and planned business entities as it streamlined decision-making and promoted a shared company culture. Table 1 illustrates the products and services provided by Fig Holding over the years.

Table 1: Timeline of Fig Holding's companies

Established	Name of the business	Service or product summarised
2003	Mayrig (Authentic Armenian Mediterranean Cuisine)	Mayrig offers the warmth and welcoming experience of a grandmother's house. Mayrig is a fine dining experience that captures the history, tradition and subtle, authentic flavours. Mayrig's flagship sails nowadays from Beirut to Riyadh, Maldives, Yerevan and Cairo.
2004	Central Kitchen	Centralized operations for catering and restaurants
2008	Fig Holding Franchises	The company is created for franchising opportunities, creation of manuals and legal work
2011	"Mayrig Gourmet"	Offers pre-cooked frozen meals and original Armenian handcraft and gifts.
2013	Batchig (Modern Armenian Lebanese Cuisine)	Batchig's menu offers an array of Armenian Lebanese specialities, creating a new buzz of Armenian Mezze worldwide. Batchig is a garden, Batchig is a Shisha chill-out location. Batchig redefines live Armenian and Lebanese cooking at a whole new level.
2016	Mayrig Riyadh	Mayrig opens its doors in Riyadh, KSA
2017	Mayrig Yerevan	Mayrig opens its doors in Yerevan, Armenia
2018	Maldives Consultancy	Promotes Mayrig's menu in the Maldives' Four Seasons Resort and Armenian food in general.
2021	Lahmajun (Armenian Pizza)	Lahmajun is just another round, thin piece of dough topped with minced meat, vegetables and herbs. Lahmajun celebrates the Armenian culinary heritage through a trendy dish in all Middle Eastern cultures. (...) Lahmajun is a concept that can be bound in a location or incorporated in a food truck.
2022	Kamakian	A retail brand selling high-quality Armenian products made by Armenian and Lebanese mothers. Kamakian engages with its products, and over 400 farmers around Lebanon. Products are sold in stores in Lebanon, Dubai and the Maldives.
2022	Mayrig Cairo	Mayrig opens its doors in Cairo, Egypt
2022	Sandwichian	Healthy street food based on Silk Road spices for exotic flavours, serving soujouk sliders featuring Silk Road spices, cured meats, yoghurt sauces, silky hummus and homemade pickles.
2023	Batchig City Centre	Batchig opens its doors in the City Centre of Beirut, Lebanon
2023	Batchig Sur Mer	Batchig opens its doors in Zaitunay Bay, Lebanon
2024	Batchig Bayada	Batchig opens its doors in Bayada, Lebanon

Source: Authors' creation

Fig Holding's flagship brand is Mayrig, a restaurant established in 2003 in Beirut, Lebanon, the first avant-garde Armenian restaurant in the Middle East. Later, the company set up a catering service unit in 2004. Fig Holding includes the Central Kitchen which was established in 2004. In 2011, "Mayrig Gourmet" opens as a destination for Armenian pre-cooked frozen meals, original handcraft, and gifts. In 2013, in Beirut, a fast-casual hospitality concept was established called "Batchig" (which translates from Armenian as a kiss), a fast-casual restaurant brand named Batchig. After gaining recognition, Mayrig soon developed a franchising program, which was first tested with franchised outlets established in Dubai (UAE) (2013) and Riyadh (KSA) (2016). In 2017, a third franchise restaurant was opened in Armenia's capital, Yerevan, which brought the Mayrig concept closer to its Armenian home country.

Further, the company established Maldives Consultancy to promote Mayrig's menu in the Four Seasons Resort in 2018. The business expanded into opening an Armenian breakfast and lunch fast food chain called Lahmajun, with 14 branches in Beirut, Geneva and Dubai. A retail line called Kamakian was founded in 2022, which promotes and sells high-quality homemade Armenian and Lebanese products produced by more than 400 farmers in Lebanon. The co-founder, Aline, also runs a YouTube channel, "Cook with Aline". The latest addition of Fig Holding is Sandwichian, created in 2022.

Mission and Values

For Fig Holding's employees, who work in the hospitality business, respect for everyone is central. Everyone is respected and welcomed, regardless of nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or social standing. Fig Holding's mission is "We are passionate trendsetters who celebrate Armenian heritage through food and hospitality". The company creates and implements culinary projects related to its Armenian heritage, whether from Mediterranean and Anatolian roots or in its globalised and urban inspirations of the Armenian diaspora.

Fig Holdings values

Quality: We take pride in providing value-added products and services that ensure consistency and growth.

Belonging: We are committed to making Fig Holding a welcoming environment that promotes engagement, trust and growth to all our talent.

Innovation: Innovation is at the core of what we do. We use our creativity to set trends and lead the market.

Responsibility: We are an integral part of the communities in which we operate. We believe in providing care to our people and giving back to the environment and society.

Diversity: It is the catalyst of our success. We create an inclusive environment that promotes respect and equal chances of growth on all levels.

Company background

The story of the Kamakian family business started in 2003 with the establishment of Mayrig, the first high-end authentic Armenian restaurant in the Arab world. The restaurant was founded by Aline Kamakian and her cousin, Serge and was later integrated into Fig Holding (see Table 1). The initial motivation to found Mayrig came from Aline, who wanted to 'realise' her late father's dream of opening an Armenian restaurant. Aline was passionate about cooking, and Mayrig, which means 'little

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mother' in Armenian, was meant to revive the forgotten flavours of Armenia, the homeland of the Kamakian family who fled the Ottoman Empire's genocide against Armenians in 1915 and were displaced in Lebanon.

Armenian food was mainly known as fast or street food in Lebanon, where people appreciate plates like Lahmajoun (Armenian Pizza), "Soujouk" (sausages) and "Basterma" (highly seasoned cured meat), which were sold in Bourj Hammoud, a vibrant Armenian neighbourhood in Beirut. Thousands of displaced Armenian refugees who had fled the genocide against the people in Turkey in the 1920s and later those who fled the annexation of the lands by Turkey (in 1939) had established themselves in Lebanon. Armenians had integrated into the country and built productive communities, contributing to the economy and society. The historical experiences of Armenians in Lebanon, characterised by past sufferings and loss and shared experiences of poverty during their early years of displacement, have marked the Armenian spirit and mindset (Rebeiz, 2023). Their experienced hardships have created a shared narrative among the Armenian community that focuses on empathy, generosity and community support, which has also been very present in the Kamakian family. The Armenians brought a rich food tradition, but their cuisine's diversity was less well-known. The family business wanted to transmit and share Armenian culture by creating the first high-end restaurant in Lebanon and the Middle East. It was also a way to give back to the (Armenian) society too.



Figure 1: Mayrig restaurant
Source: Kamakian (n.d.)

Aline Kamakian, a passionate food chef, saw an opportunity to offer a vast array of healthy and traditional dishes and thus introduce the Lebanese people to the forgotten flavours of Armenia. Using recipes, she learned from her mother and grandmother, she established the Mayrig restaurant (see Figure 1) which introduced customers to unexplored dishes, such as "Mante" (meat dumplings), Mayrig's signature dishes, "Sou Beureg", and "Wild Cherry Kebab". Mayrig, located in a hip and central quarter of Beirut called Gemmayze, sometimes also called the Soho of Beirut, was an old quarter of Beirut with French townhouses and mandate architecture right next to Beirut port. Gemmayze offered a buzzing nightlife with bars, coffee shops, conceptual restaurants, clubs and art galleries. The restaurant welcomes guests in a cosy, elegant ambience that recalls traditional Armenia.

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Originally, the business was run as a partnership with Aline and her cousin, however this partnership ended in 2019. Supported by her family, Aline bought out her cousin's share. Over the years, she has had a remarkable entrepreneurial career characterised by philanthropic leadership, inspiring others to make a positive impact. This is reflected in the company's culture and its care for its employees. For example, Fig Holding provides shares to employees dedicated to the business. As a result, more than 90% of them have stayed with the business. Today, Fig Holding is a growing family-to-corporate business run by the board of Fig Holding. The business employs more than 120 people in Lebanon and abroad. Fig Holding has made itself a name in the hospitality sector within the region and abroad. However, the business has faced numerous substantial challenges and threats to its existence, being based in Lebanon, one of the world's most volatile and politically risky countries.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lebanon was in a total lockdown, requiring Fig Holding to find alternatives to deliver food to people's homes. The business continues to operate the "Lahmajun" food delivery brand to retain and keep employees in their jobs. "Lahmajun" is originally a form of Armenian or Middle Eastern pizza with a "quick bite in between" (see Figure 2). It is a round, thin, slightly crispy dough topped with meat and spices, which is very popular in the region. "Lahmajun", the business, moved from being a delivery solution to being rolled out in various locations in Beirut, and the brand has been sold in 10 different kitchens across Dubai since 2021. During the 2021 Expo in Dubai, the family business engaged with the street food concept and introduced 'Sandwichian', served from a food truck and offered 'silk road' fast food.

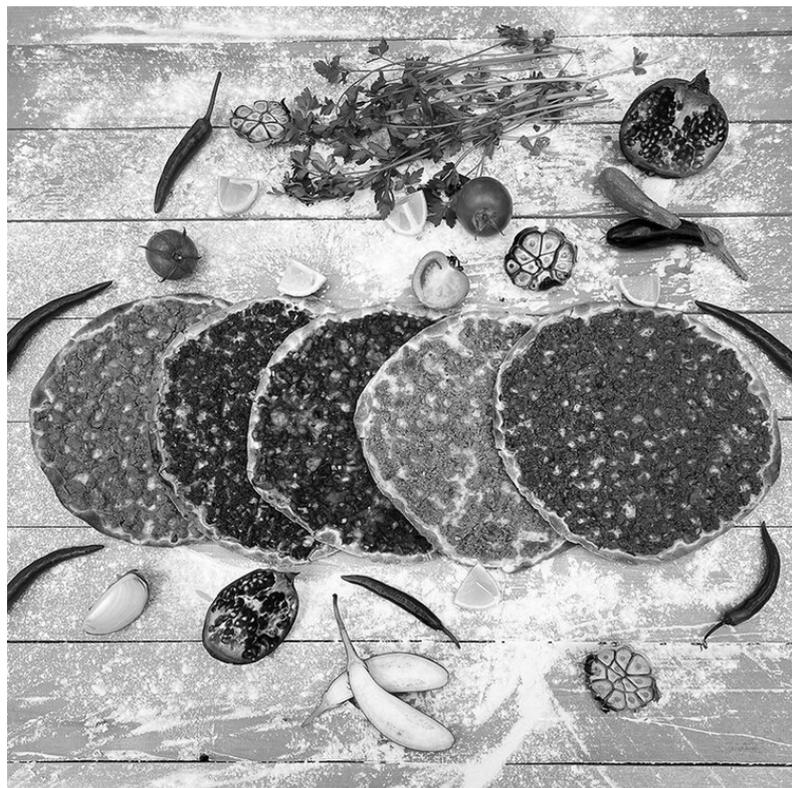


Figure 2: Lahmajun
Source: Kamakian (n.d.)

Fig Holding provided support and help to thousands of impoverished and diminished families who have suffered the consequences of Lebanon's economic crisis and also in the aftermath of the Beirut Port explosion in August 2020. Fig Holding added a social entrepreneurial venture to the company portfolio - "Kamakian" - which works with over 400 Lebanese farmers in 2021. The company sells natural products, such as Armenian specialities, salts, jams and preserves, sauces and home-grown honey produced by women farmers from different parts of the country, e.g. the Beqaa Valley, Jbaa in the South, from the central Metn region and the northern shores of Anfeh. Kamakian sells its products in Lebanon and online to the vast Lebanese diaspora market, estimated to have 16 million Lebanese abroad (compared with less than 4 million in Lebanon) (Verdeil and Dewailly, 2019). Kamakian works mainly with women farmers and produces speciality products based on local resources and agricultural production. "Kamakian" is Fig Holding's way of giving back to the land and the most vulnerable among its population. It is also a tribute to Lebanon, the country that welcomed thousands of Armenian refugees after they were expelled from their homeland and left with nothing.

SDG # 1 Poverty Reduction at Fig Holding

In Lebanon, the home country of Fig Holding, the poverty levels have doubled, and health deprivation have tripled since 2019 (UNESCWA, 2023). The country has had very weak or non-existent social protection in the past, and people had very limited to no access to good public services, such as health and social aid, which disproportionately negatively affects vulnerable and poor populations. However, since the Fall of 2019, the country has been confronted with several consecutive massive crises: In addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, the country has suffered from one of the most severest economic crises in history: In 2019, Lebanon defaulted on its massive public debt (around \$90 billion or 170% of GDP), leading to a currency crisis where the Lebanese pound lost over 95% of its value against the US dollar on the black market (World Bank Group, 2024); the crisis furthermore crippled Lebanon's banking sector, which imposed strict capital controls, locking depositors out of their US dollar accounts and savings. In this context, Lebanese depositors have lost over \$50-70 billion in savings trapped in the insolvent banking system (LCPS, 2020). In addition, Lebanon had to endure the Beirut Port explosion in August 2020. The port explosion was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in recent history, and it had wide-ranging consequences for the Lebanese society and economy (Care, 2021). The explosion caused an estimated \$4.6 billion in physical damages (Care, 2021). Schools, healthcare facilities, hospitals, living quarters, and numerous businesses were destroyed, leading to economic losses between \$2.9 and \$3.5 billion (Care, 2021; Nassar & Nastaca, 2021). More than two hundred individuals lost their lives in the explosion, 6,500 were injured, and more than 300,000 people were displaced because their homes had been damaged or destroyed (Nassar & Nastaca, 2021). The explosion also destroyed Lebanon's only grain silos and different warehouses where food was stored for the country, which reduced the capacity to import and store cereals to 1/5 less of pre-explosion levels and disrupted the food supply of the country. Consequently, food prices soared 11 times the pre-crisis level and imposed food insecurity on 46% of Lebanese citizens and 50% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. In Lebanon, the middle class has been shrinking to non-existence, and many people have fallen under the poverty line (Asi, 2022).

Beirut port explosion 2020 and the aftermath

The Beirut Port explosion took place on August 4, 2020. The explosion's epicentre was just a few hundred metres away from Fig Holding's offices and the Mayrig restaurant, which were located in Gemmayzeh, separated from the explosion site only by a highway (Abou-Haka, 2023). It was still amid

the COVID-19 pandemic, and the government had announced another lockdown from August 6th to 10th to curb the spread amidst a spike in cases. The Mayrig restaurant was open for only a few days to provide income for its employees. All staff members were present since they had few opportunities to work during the previous lockdown periods and needed to support families at home. Fig Holding held a management team meeting to discuss further strategies for the looming lockdown on the day of the explosion. The office was on the third floor overlooking the neighbourhood where they observed the firefighters trying to contain the flames in the port's grain silos. They even filmed the scene to share it on social media when the explosion went off and engulfed people, buildings, roads, and everything. The immediate aftermath for Fig Holding and the Mayrig restaurant was dire: seven employees became irreversibly disabled on that very day, and 29 had to be hospitalised with bone fractures, cuts and other traumas; the offices, as well as the restaurant, were destroyed. Very few of the team members were still capable of functioning. Gemmayzeh, where Mayrig was located, had been destroyed; many people died there, and entire houses had collapsed or became uninhabitable. The Mayrig restaurant, the kitchen, the holding office, and assets such as delivery cars were destroyed; the nearby family home was also destroyed. According to Aline, the business *"was minus zero"*. The board decided on the same day to return to work and rebuild everything. The next day, employees who could still help started cleaning up the area around the restaurant and Mayrig's destruction site. Aline visited all her 29 staff members in the hospital to reassure them that things would move on and Fig Holding was committed to taking care of their hospital costs.

Moreover, Fig Holding supported employees who had lost their homes because of the explosion, where they leveraged their social capital and contacted influential and wealthy people in their network who provided food and groceries, plates, fuel and other things. Donors were reluctant to give money then and focused more on material assistance. It became evident that Fig Holding needed to rebuild Mayrig and reopen the business as soon as possible so that the business would provide income and cash for its employees. A small contractor was convinced to rebuild the restaurant to a functional level within a week. The business used a crowdfunding campaign and pitched to several NGOs in Beirut to alleviate the situation. In this way, Fig Holding could raise financial resources from NGOs specialised in supporting businesses with their repairs. It also benefited from the solid and trustful relationships created since the beginning of Mayrig in 2003. Suppliers trusted and supplied the business with the necessary materials and resources to rebuild the company *"on credit"* – Fig Holding would repay them slowly over the years. Fig Holding's actions fit SDG#1.5, which helps build the resilience of those in vulnerable situations and reduces their exposure and vulnerability to economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters. Aline summarises, *"And this is how we started again. So there were different levels. First of all, it was your attitude, devotion, stubbornness, and craziness that gave trust; that gave hope for others to do that."* It took nine months to rebuild Mayrig and about seven months to repair or rebuild the houses of Fig Holding employees or people indirectly connected with Fig Holding (for example, contractors, some suppliers, etc.). Altogether, Fig Holding supported 120 individuals and their families, showing alignment to SDG#1.4 by ensuring their employees who are poor and the vulnerable after the disaster have equal rights to economic resources, access to basic services and control of a safe shelter.

Rebuilding the community

In the days after the blast, at Mayrig, there was no water or bread to eat, but the chef of the Batchig restaurant, which was on the eastern outskirts of Beirut that was unaffected by the explosion, brought

sandwiches for the team. Aline realised that many other people were hungry in the vicinity, so she asked the Batchig chef to bring double the amount the next day. On the third day, Batchig delivered 300 sandwiches that were distributed to whoever asked for them. The team soon realised that people could not survive on sandwiches alone and began to cook from whatever they had. They cooked on open fires that consumed broken wood from the destroyed Mayrig restaurant and distributed food to whoever came. The business created makeshift tents with restaurant remnants for employees and families with nowhere to go by feeding people experiencing poverty, supporting SDG#1.1. What started with a temporary kitchen to provide providential meals for those in need turned into a full-fledged humanitarian action that provided 2500 to 3000 meals twice a day for several months. Fig Holding demonstrates their abilities to mobilise resources to implement initiatives that help to eradicate poverty, aligned with Target 1.a of SDG#1. Fig Holding teamed up with “World Central Kitchen”, an NGO that was founded in 2010 and that provides food relief in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises. A year after the deadly explosion, the Mayrig team was still feeding 500 impoverished people a day whilst running the restaurant. World Central Kitchen supported the Fig Holding/ Mayrig team and created the cooking infrastructure to supply meals on that scale daily; the NGO also provided a good part of the money necessary to buy the ingredients for each meal. Fig Holding’s efforts aligned with indicator 1.4.1 in SDG#1 to ensure everyone can access basic needs such as food.

Fig Holding also leveraged their networks to provide financial aid for this initiative, which worked out because of the good personal reputation in the community. During the first weeks, people would come to Mayrig and receive their food boxes; later, however, the food distribution was coordinated by different NGOs, which would provide lists of eligible beneficiaries. Aline recalls, *“We worked with different NGOs because it's not my job (to logistically organise a full-fledged humanitarian program). I don't know how to do this. The NGOs used to tell me we need “this much and that much” and I used to do that and distribute what was requested.”*

The business had learned a lot through this time and acquired several new capabilities necessary to be a good humanitarian agent. The business had to develop a different mindset, moving from an entrepreneurial mindset to solving problems and receiving help as a business and humanitarian. The team also learned about the logistics of providing a community kitchen for needy people. Notably, they had to understand how to ensure food safety and storage, especially when handling perishable food with a flawed electricity supply under adverse conditions. Fig Holding learned about community outreach and donor management and had to manage the collaboration with different NGOs efficiently. They contributed significantly to building the resilience of people experiencing poverty and those in vulnerable situations and reducing their exposure and vulnerability, as stated in SDG#1.5.

Engagement for Nagorno Karabach

In 2023, members of the Fig Holding team were called again to help tens of thousands of displaced and hungry people who had fled ethnic cleansing in Berg-Karabach amid war and violence. There had been a long ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh territory, which has an overwhelming ethnic Armenian population despite being internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan. After a 44-day war in 2020 between both countries and a blockage of the area by Azerbaijan in December 2022, the conflict culminated in a comprehensive military assault dubbed an “anti-terrorist operation” targeting the Armenian population. In October 2023,

Azerbaijani forces gained control over Nagorno-Karabakh, leading to a mass exodus where the majority of the estimated 120,000 ethnic Armenians evacuated the region to Armenia (Sargsyan, 2024). Aline and her family, being also ethnic Armenians, had watched the news about this tragedy unfold and were reminded of the historic sufferance of their people. Hence, they immediately prepared to engage again. Fig Holding contacted World Central Kitchen, and they agreed to deploy a team to Armenia. Previous experiences working with World Central Kitchen on the frontlines of humanitarian disaster relief after the Beirut explosion taught the business the necessary skills to deal with massive food insecurity and impoverished populations. Within days, the Mayrig team was actionable by aligning themselves with contributing to SDG#1.3 to implement appropriate social protection systems and measures for the poor and vulnerable. Fig Holding convinced the management of the Mayrig franchisee in Armenia and several restaurant owners in Yerevan to participate in the initiatives, allowing them to provide over 1200 meals a day. They also raised funds through different donors, which support Target 1.b of SDG#1 to back accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions and SDG#1.4, ensuring equal access to resources and basic services.

Aline remembers some of the challenges: *“We had a lot of malnutrition cases. We spoke with the doctors because people had suffered more than months of blockage before they escaped; most were suffering from malnutrition, and they couldn't digest the food we had prepared. So, we had to revert to less bloating food.”* Spreading dignity and compassion combined with a warm meal made a difference for many and the business. It was also a sign of hope for these displaced people, which would support their physical and moral strength to continue with their lives. Their work illustrates an excellent example of target 1.a in SDG#1, where significant resources were mobilised through different sources and cooperation to support the basic needs of the displaced groups.

Further engagement in Lebanon

Since October 2023, there has been an escalation of hostilities along the Lebanon-Israel border between Israel and Hezbollah. This armed militia has created an active conflict zone in the southern border areas of Lebanon and internally displaced more than 80,000 people (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024). Again, Fig Holding and Mayrig engaged and supplied meals for hundreds of people, aligning with Target 1.a of SDG#1 by mobilising resources to provide adequate and predictable means to reduce poverty. Yet, they limit it to a first coverage of a few days or a week, and then people must be able to organise themselves alone, supporting SDG#1.4 to provide basic needs. For Aline, it is vital not to turn people into beggars and get them used to begging and depending on help, as she notices many people change from barely asking for help to becoming beggars. The decision is consistent with Target 1.2 of SDG#1, which aims to reduce poverty by providing opportunities to work with them. This is in the philosophy of Fig Holding: *“We receive so many beggars in front of Mayrig. They throw their head to the back (Lebanese gesture for ‘no’) as soon as we tell them”, “Start to work with us”. They're not interested. So, it's very important for us to get this; we believe there is work for everyone who wants to work.”* The business helps, but the principle is to provide help so that people can help themselves become independent and build a stronger future.

What next for Fig Holding?

Despite not being a social venture, providing help to alleviate poverty and hunger has been an essential element of the business community engagement and culture, which shows alignment with

SDG#1. As a result of the Beirut explosion, Fig Holding and members of the World Central Kitchen created Sawablessed (“together blessed”) to continuously support displaced and impoverished people in Lebanon. Sawablessed also involved other members of the Beirut food scene, such as Kamel Mouzawak, a leading advocate for supporting local farmers and the founder of Lebanon’s first farmers’ market. Sawablessed became an intrinsic part of Fig Holding’s brands, allowing the company to keep raising money from different sources and donors and communicate transparently via social media about continuous activities to support the poor and needy. This initiative helps contribute to SDG#1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 to eradicate poverty in crises-laded countries like Lebanon.

For Fig Holding, it has been clear that business success is not just profit-making. It has significant responsibilities towards its employees and communities. Their restaurants have always paid as much attention to local sourcing as possible. Particularly with their lines of business, such as the Kamakian brand and their reliance on local agriculture, the business provides critical market access to women farmers, strengthening their livelihood and increasing women's income in rural communities, aligning with target 1.4 of SDG#1. It is a fundamental commitment of Fig Holding to invest in all-natural products sourced from farms with sustainable farming practices, which ultimately benefits local communities. The business has a long-term sustainability perspective. This philosophy is also reflected in how Fig Holding has dealt with its employees: supporting their employees by rebuilding their houses and apartments and paying for their hospital bills, which is not required by any law. Operating the business under adverse conditions allows them to keep employees and their families afloat, thus providing hope for the future and the assurance that their employer cares about them. While Lebanon struggles to emerge from crises, Fig Holding is determined to rebuild and rebound its communities and country with continuous efforts for sustainable development.

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