

# Socio-Economic Rehabilitation Programme for South Lebanon phase II



## From recovery to development

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## Project brief: UNDP/CDR in South Lebanon



### 2000-2006: Socio-Economic Rehabilitation Programme Phase I

In 2000, UNDP, in partnership with the Government of Lebanon, represented by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), established a post conflict development programme in the former occupied areas of the South called "Socio Economic Rehabilitation Programme for South Lebanon". In a region occupied for 22 years, the Programme targeted local capacity development and reintegration conducive to the stability of communities, and to further attract those internally displaced elsewhere in the country.

The programme targeted municipalities, cooperatives, youth, mine victims and ex-detainees with trainings and socio-economic projects.

### 2006 war- 2009: Recovery phase

Following significant progress, the July 2006 war took place, with grave consequences to the lives and livelihoods of the southern communities, compounding poverty and development challenges by massive destruction. The quick interventions, only two days after the war, have encouraged various donors to channel their support to the South relying on the programme's setup. Immediately after the war, the programme implemented and led the UN efforts to support the recovery of the South.

Relying on its large networks with the communities and local authorities, UNDP utilized its own resources to initiate a damage assessment and lead a major recovery process in the South in over 170 affected villages. Activities moved from rubble removal to support of basic infrastructure, focusing on water and sanitation, to gradually support local livelihoods initiatives and small scale entrepreneurial activities.

The massive destruction and the adverse war impact on socio economic life, is still far from being recovered even to the pre-July 2006 war. The local economy that was hardly recovering from the long years of occupation received a massive drawback. Lives and livelihoods of the communities remain vulnerable, and in dire need for support.

## 2009-2011: Transition phase from recovery to development - Socio economic Rehabilitation Programme Phase II

The current project within the UNDP Socio Economic Rehabilitation Programme for South Lebanon (phase 2) is an expansion of the first phase initiated before 2006, with a wider engagement to an array of specialized activities, ranging from local governance, inclusive youth mobilization and reconciliation, capacity development to socio-economic rehabilitation.

The programme is well poised to implement activities to cover the transitory phase rolling out from the recovery and post conflict rehabilitation carving the way for sustainable developmental activities. Therefore, the rationale for this programme is ultimately enhancing the socio-economic conditions of the residents of the South, mainly the vulnerable groups, as a preventive measure for future conflict and conducive to social dialogue and reintegration.

The programme is planning and implementing its foreseen activities through its established networks with local authorities, community based organizations, civil society organizations, and community groups; while keeping strong links with central government.

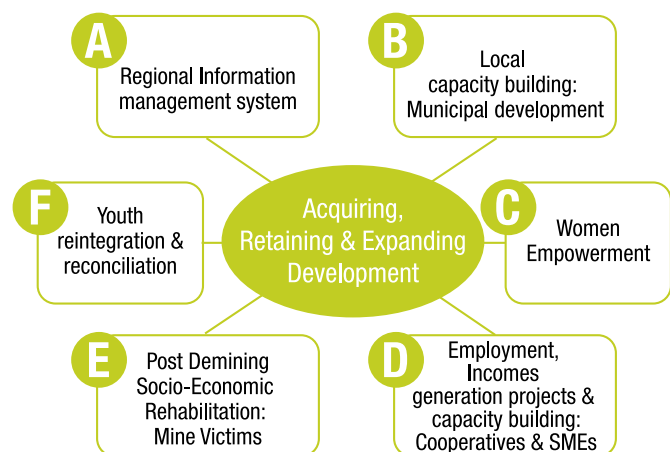
The programme's primary objective is to sustain and expand post-conflict socio-economic rehabilitation and development in the communities targeting the various strata of the society, of which socio-economic development conflict prevention and peace building initiatives will play a major role in delivering security and sustainability.

### Programme Outputs:

#### 1. Regional information management System

2. Capacity building and support to local governance structure
3. Re-creation of local economic activities
4. Youth mobilization for social dialogue and participation to socio-economic development

### Programme components and objectives:



#### A Data management and Programme orientation

The information management system currently being used by the programme will continue to be updated to facilitate the efficient gathering, organization, processing, and retrieval of community information as deemed necessary by stakeholders. The programme will continue to provide equal unrestricted access to information on local realities, potentials and opportunities based on which priorities can be determined and decisions can be made. This will be used to open a consensus based planning and monitoring process by providing accurate information in a timely manner. This is a service to be shared by all parties interested in the development of the region: government agencies, donors, local community structures, private sector organizations, and organizations of the civil society.

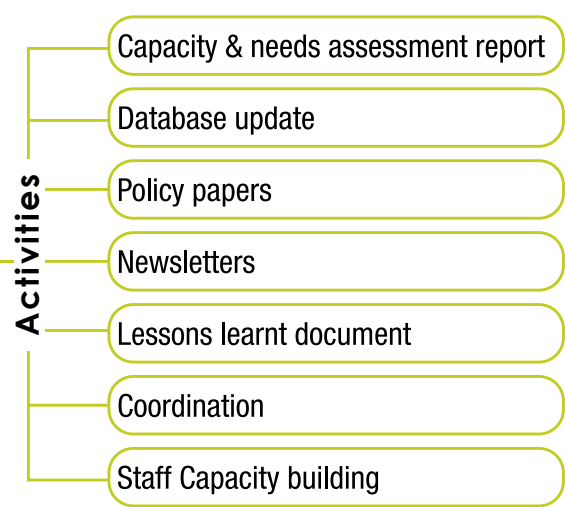
Consultancy services institutions were recruited to conduct a Capacity & Needs Assessments of 36 (out of 189) villages representatives of clusters of villages in the Cazas of Tyre, Bent Jbeil, Marjayoun, Hasbaya, Nabatiyeh and parts of Jezzine. The study is assessing post recovery strengths and weaknesses to extract best practices and lessons learned. In parallel, the study will draw conclusions on the main constraints and opportunities of Municipalities, Cooperatives, Youths Groups, Mine victims and SMEs. Additionally, the institutions are developing the general profiles of the targeted villages as well as the general profile of each "Caza" in terms of socio-economic indicators and relevant labor market. Thus, the results of this assessment will orient the programme's intervention in 2011, suggest potential training topics, and identify income generating activities and livelihood needs of targeted communities.

In order to strengthen linkages between National Policy and National Projects, the programme will identify three major linkages with national policy issues, through the development of three policy papers.

The papers outlines are "Local Government in Post Conflict Regions", "Decentralization and Local Governance" "Women's citizenship, participation and leadership" in South Lebanon.

It should be noted that the information management tool established by the programme prior to the July 2006 war, and significantly upgraded after the war, has been instrumental in connecting the South communities with other UN agencies, and NGOs, and above all, with government ministries, through UNDP central presence in Beirut.

Output 1: Regional information management system



## The LIVELIHOODS coordination meetings

The 2006 war severely affecting the livelihood of Southerners led to the establishment of the livelihood working group as a response to strong demand from NGOs and UN agencies operating in the region. On the socio economic front, UNDP led the Livelihoods working group meetings and is still actively maintaining coordination monthly until present time. Topics ranged from mine action, agriculture, cooperatives, environment, cultural heritage, SMEs, and various issues related to livelihoods. Information may concern all aspects of the humanitarian response from livelihoods operations and planning to advocacy and research. Relevant organizations in livelihoods operations are invited to the thematic cluster sessions; speakers and attendees vary from community, cooperatives and municipalities members, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, UNIFIL battalions, Government Institutions including Ministries, private institutions and donors.



The benefits of the Livelihood meetings are many: to provide a monthly forum for all livelihoods stakeholders to exchange information and encourage debates on approaches to improve the livelihood of southern communities; to coordinate stakeholders' activities to avoid overlaps and gaps; to promote synergies between different implementing strategies endorsing sharing resources to reduce costs and increase efficiency of interventions impeded by the dwelling resources; to communicate to stakeholders any developments concerning livelihood policy decisions, recommendations and meeting outcomes; to provide the channels to address information needs of each organization, to facilitate access to that information and process information in the most comprehensive way.

### The latest topics included:

- Strategy Advancement of the Agricultural Sector \_ Program of Action of the Ministry 2010-2014
- Cultural Heritage and Urban Development Project; a project implemented and supervised by the CDR in five historical cities in Lebanon including Tyre
- Developing Sustainable Agriculture in South Lebanon through preserving Food Heritage
- Challenges facing Solid Waste sector in Lebanon
- Water User Associations expected role in the Litany river  
And discussions were around their impact on socio-economic development and on the livelihood of the inhabitants of South.

In this line, the programme was involved in initiating the livelihood matrix mapping stakeholder's current and planned activities in different fields within livelihoods; and minutes of meetings with presentations held during the forums are circulated. This forum also created strong networks among stakeholders and speakers whose contacts are shared for future follow up. However, on a monthly basis the programme has the challenging task of identifying attention-grabbing topics that would justify the mobilization of organizations' staff faced with decreasing financial and human power.

## **B** Municipalities, the Programme's main partners

Municipalities, being the local governance bodies in the villages, are not only mandated but also looked at as the main public and social interference in the village. However, several constraints hinder the work and development of the municipalities such as:

- Lack of decentralization, which offers less flexibility for municipalities in decision making on the policy level;

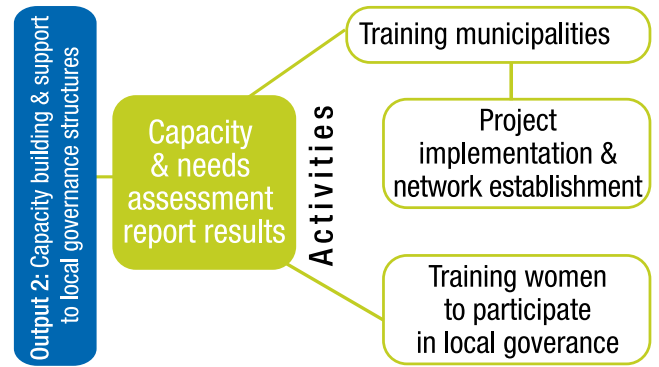
- Lack of resources and know-how, mainly in fund raising techniques and income generation projects orientation;
- Lack of technical expertise of the human capital within the municipalities due to the fact that the existing structures are more politically oriented than development and services oriented;
- Lack of master planning & contingency planning;
- Need of capacity building in topics such as participatory approach, strategic planning, management and technical skills;

- Lack of participation of women in public administration, as no women has ever reached the position of mayor yet in South Lebanon, and women representation in the municipal council is almost negligible.

Thus, the local governance support of the UNDP programme will focus on capacity development of municipalities and women in response to the needs assessment that is being conducted. Priority projects will be identified at the end of the training workshops and will aim to strengthen the role of local governance structures as a referral body in the village as well as strengthen ties with the social and productive sectors. Addressing the gender issues will be a crucial part and parcel of all training and capacity building activities. This includes encouragement of participation of women in working groups and local entities, as well as advocacy of gender issues within the training.

A contracted company is finalizing the "Capacity & Needs Assessments" of target communities in South Lebanon. The company is conducting the study in 36 (out of 189) villages representatives of clusters of villages in the Cazas of Tyre, Bent Jbeil, Marjayoun, Hasbaya, Nabatiyeh and parts of Jezzine. In the meantime, 189 municipalities were approached to extract the needed information about the background of each of the newly elected members and key players in each village to be trained. Whereas, potential women to be trained were identified, including candidates of the municipal elections and active women in their communities. The first batch of trainings will be conducted at a national level while trainings on disaster risk management will be conducted in 2011.

The foreseen capacitated governance structures will cater for the developmental needs of the region, and as importantly cater for their constituencies' needs at times of conflict, recovery, and post conflict circumstances.



## C Empowerment of Women

Southern women are not passively confronting their patriarchal society. They are actively demanding a greater role in both of the social and economic arenas. In spite of the long living traditions and norms that restrict them, women have found ways of asserting their rights and are challenging their status quo, voicing their demands for equality in the family and society, and calling for women's economic, political and social empowerment. The Millennium Development Goal on gender equality, recognizes that women have the right to participate equally with men at all levels and in all aspects of public life and decision-making, whether it is deciding how the household income is spent or determining how the country is run. However, women continue to be under-represented in all areas of decision-making and face significant barriers to their full and equal participation in the structures and institutions that govern, and directly affect their lives.



Thus, The UNDP South programme is emphasizing on gender equality in order to promote and ensure women's effective participation in the community such as municipal councils, cooperatives, and women's associations in order to prepare and encourage them for enhanced engagement and decision making roles in the future. Extended support is targeting women and female youth members trained on women's citizenship and leadership skills with direct hands-on experience in local governance structures such as municipal councils. This will strengthen women's security, and develop their ability to actively participate in the recovery and conflict prevention processes as well as the daily tasks of community work. Furthermore, this activity will encourage other women to consider local governance structures as their reference for enhanced cooperation. All through the program, beneficiaries are being equally targeted from mixed gender. Women will consequently be encouraged to undergo business transactions, negotiations, own assets and land, participate in social as well as economic workshops. In addition to that, a policy paper will be drafted and will target the situation of "Women's citizenship, participation and leadership" in South Lebanon.

In addition to women's roles in society as housewives and mothers, southern women are commonly dynamic farmers assisting their husbands in their daily errands. With the support of the programme and a few NGOs, southern women are encouraged to further expand their activities by venturing into the business and political world in an era where opportunities, employment and income generation opportunities have become narrower. To respond to the deepening economic crisis and its impact on rural communities, the programme supported the establishment of numerous women cooperatives, and Southern women were supported and mobilized to focus their

efforts to stand for their right of equality, survival and social security.

The women cooperatives' types of activities vary from the production of traditional rural food items to handicrafts. Women are pleased to be actively involved in their village's activities, to participate in their households as income providers, and are proud to make their traditional recipes or artisanal goods known and available in the market. Their satisfaction goes beyond financial gratification; women agree that this rewarding experience made them confident of their newly found skills that helped in their emancipation socially and morally, and empowered their role as decision makers.



Interestingly, instead of surrendering to defeat when the 2006 war destroyed most of what they have earned, many women cooperatives decided to resume control and restart their activities. *"It is a pity that our work is so much linked to the economic and political situation. However, my team is always ready to do all what is possibly needed to overcome all sorts of crisis"* mentioned Mrs. Daad, the

head of Deir Kanoun Ras El Ein cooperative, who insists that her cooperative's teamwork and enjoyable atmosphere are keys to crisis prevention and recovery. This distinctively highlights Southern women's will to resist, as well as their valuable contribution to peace building initiatives.

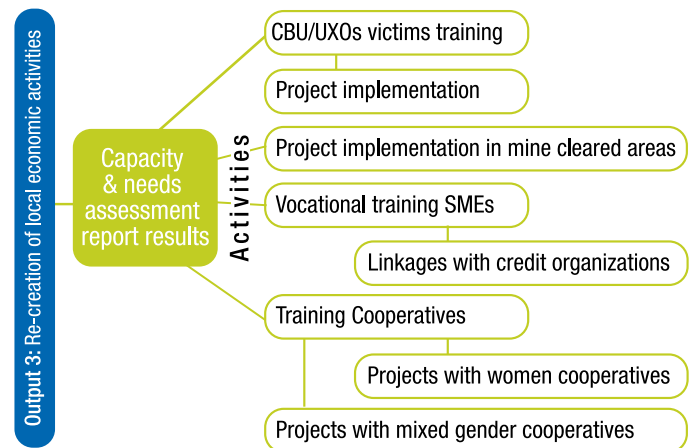
The impact of such activities empowering women will only be visible if sustainability and a long term vision are in the mind sets and actions of both development agencies and women themselves. So far, it is clearly noticeable that various women cooperatives have grown through UNDP's programs in terms of skills, self confidence and income generation; women are now more capable of finding solutions to maintain their sustainability and progress.

## **D** Employment, Income Generation projects & capacity building: Supporting Cooperatives & SMEs

Despite the huge efforts extended by the UN, NGOs and the donor community, the socio economic needs of the South are still far from being met. The reconstruction programs and recovery interventions have mostly mitigated the physical and infrastructure impact of the war. However, given the magnitude of destruction, and the economic and political crisis following the war, the socio economic



needs still necessitate improvement interventions. For instance, the principal agricultural sector is still largely hindered by the presence of unexploded cluster sub-munitions. While Agricultural cooperatives and Small Medium Enterprises (SME) in the region undertake extensive work to retain a livelihood that is significantly deteriorating, they are confronted by several constraints.



Prior to the interventions, the programme is updating its cooperatives and SMEs assessment through questionnaires, field visits, and focus groups that capture all necessary socio-economic features. The results of the assessment will lead to the identification of the appropriate trainings and projects. The programme's support to cooperatives and SMEs includes the three necessary elements of capacity building: trainings; networking and linkages mechanisms; and financial project support. UNDP accompanies the initial establishment of cooperatives and accompany them to arrive into sustainability and self sufficiency. Resources allocation for the provision of equipment & machineries needed for production as well as consultancies throughout the cooperatives' establishment stages are provided. Finally, the programme assists to boost the exposure of the cooperatives by creating marketing opportunities and events, and by supporting their participation in local exhibitions. On the other hand, the programme also intends to facilitate linkages with credit organizations. The training for cooperatives will be designed to instill the private sector culture of competitiveness within the cooperatives

with specific focus on three main areas: **(1)** customized assessment and training of cooperatives to improve the managerial and technical qualifications of the personnel with the development of exquisite products for each cooperative; **(2)** the development of a regional quality control center to assist the testing, labeling and packaging of cooperative products; and **(3)** the development of sustainable market presence through links with the private sector at the local and national level. The trainings of the SMEs will depend on the results of the labor market demand assessment that will be finalized by the end of year 2010.

It is important to note that in the south 30 Cooperatives out of 50 are Agro-Food producers. The remaining 20 are specialized in the following sectors: Honey (Seven), Pottery (One), Accessories "faux bijoux" (Six), Shoe making (One), and Soap (Five).

Thus, the cooperatives & SMEs support element in the UNDP socio economic programme for South Lebanon is meant to provide food and economic security in politically charged regions. The empowerment of the cooperatives and SMEs as indigenous drivers of post conflict economic recovery is one of the main objectives of the project.

### UNIFIL & UNDP Food and Artisanal festival



Following the success of the first catering event of UNDP cooperatives at the UNIFIL base camp, and upon the demand of participants for similar exhibitions, a second festival took place on the 8th of October 2010. Once again, UNIFIL and UNDP joined efforts to create a festival of Lebanese homemade Traditional food and handi-crafts all 100% made in South Lebanon.

A 5\$ buffet encompassed the diverse culinary traditions of the south while 18 cooperatives stands exhibited their produces. The produces ranged from traditional food to artisanal works such as soap, pottery and crochet. The cooperatives were all supported by the UNDP programme or by UNIFIL quick impact projects through the provision of equipment, capacity building trainings and participation to exhibitions.

The timing of the exhibition was well thought: "few months prior to Christmas break when various battalions and UNIFIL civilians go back to their home country". Thus, the produces purchased "are perfect souvenir gifts for the families to share the traditions of Lebanon" said Julie from New Zealand. Cooperatives and battalions were eagerly attempting to communicate, some cooperatives adapted their signs in English while the battalions were enthusiastically using the few Arabic words they knew "Marhaba, shoukran". In addition to that, battalions do not have the occasion to go out of the base often, "I have been in Lebanon since three months and I am finally discovering the local cuisine, it is not commercial, and it is totally different from what we eat in the restaurants facing the base" explains Claudal a Battalion form France.

*"I attended the event of last year, and I was looking forward to come when I saw the invitation in my inbox; I am thrilled that it is a tradition that is expanding every year with more variety. This is a biscuit I will never find in a store"* said Greta from Canada while savoring her biscuit purchased from the women cooperative of Deir Kanoun Ras El Ein. *"I bought a jar of fig jam and a cake that I will eat here with my colleagues, whereas this beautiful oil lantern is for my wife in Greece"* described commandant Stelio. Robert from France wants to have the contacts of some

of the cooperatives to make sure he gets fresh food to his family before he goes to France. In his speech, Mr. Francesco Manca, the Deputy Director of Political and Civil Affairs at UNIFIL, highlighted that *“this is the kind of cultural mix UNIFIL peacekeepers want to share with Lebanese; it also contributes to the positive impact of the economy and promotes gender initiatives”*. Major General Alberto Asarta Cuevas, the Force Commander and Head of Mission of the UNIFIL, visited the exhibition, interacted with exhibitors and appreciated the buffet with his wife; he expressed in the guest book: *“Thanks a lot for giving us this opportunity to interact with the Lebanese population...you are key and essential to accomplish our mission in this beautiful country”*



On the other hand the cooperatives witnessed a different approach to a new market that was tailor made to foreign needs *“my experience of last year made me understand the type of products that would fit the demand of the battalions”* explained Mr. Ashmar from Halloussieh cooperative. Beyond this new market opportunity, the cooperatives generated profits above their expectations and generously offered to participants tasty samples of their products.

Both exhibitors and participants were insisting on conducting such events frequently. Alessandro enthusiastically admitted *“Wonderful; 10 +; I never tasted those dishes before; we really eat well in Lebanon! I would say it is the best food I tasted after Italian food” ... coming from an Italian, this statement is surely gratifying!*

## When cooperatives, municipalities, and youngsters work together



Since 2000, the UNDP programme has been working in the South to support cooperatives, municipalities and youth groups. Today the fruits of those efforts are progressively visible.

The women cooperative of Bint Jbeil that was established by UNDP in 2006 took the initiative of organizing an artisanal exhibition in their city. They realized that

they had a lot of produces remaining that needed to be consumed the earliest possible. Ramadan period was close, and the Lebanese diaspora in the country during summer was going to go back to their countries of origin for the holy month. Thus, the women wanted to benefit from the presence of those additional people in the country and the fact that the tradition of Ramadan involves collecting food reserves for the month.

The municipality, JBDA and UNDP assisted the cooperative to set the exhibition especially in terms of logistics. The premise was offered by an inhabitant of the village touched by the enthusiasm of the women and by this one of a kind initiative. Two weeks before the event the youth group of Bint Jbeil assisted the cooperative in printing and designing signs and invitation letters: they distributed 750 invitations to official entities, NGOs, union

of municipalities and key players in the region and hanged signs in Bint jbeil and neighboring villages as a public invitation. The cooperative invited other entities involved in artisanal works or food processing to participate at the exhibition for a fee of 50,000 L.L for the five days long exhibition. The youngsters also helped the cooperative in transporting the produces and displaying them in the exhibition while the municipality provided the tables and the chairs necessary.



A member of the municipality was surprised to see that the cooperative had so many produces, and the mayor encouraged all the attendees to support the cooperative in this initiative during his opening speech "nobody should leave empty handed". The youngsters were also present to assist in selling the produces on the different stands. A total of 2,400,000 L.L was the final harvest of the exhibition. 200,000 L.L was given to five of the most needy ladies members of the cooperative who assisted in the exhibition, bearing in mind that 15 women worked on the success of this event.

This initiative is a successful model of cooperatives, youth and municipalities working hand in hand.

## **E Post Demining Socio-Economic Rehabilitation: Victims of cluster bombs & Mines**

In South Lebanon, socioeconomic development continues to be negatively affected by mines and cluster bombs; casualty figures increased dramatically immediately after the 2006 conflict. Despite a

significant reduction of new victims since then, recently affected areas are still in need of mine risk education and socio economic projects to rehabilitate mine-affected areas and assist mine victims. In this context, the UNDP socio- economic programme for South Lebanon, in partnership with the LMAC, targets mine victims and cleared areas with trainings and projects.

The lists of mine victims post 2006 war as well as mine affected areas provided by the LMAC were reassessed through questionnaires, one to one interviews and focus groups to identify potential trainees, training topics as well as villages to be targeted with projects. Villages with the highest percentage of mines/sqm and mine victims were prioritized and will be supported by socio economic projects. The main objective of the focus groups was to assess the immediate needs of the mine victims and recommend possible remedies that are likely to alleviate their suffering and integrate them into the community.



The importance of targeting this strata of society was evident during the focus groups where each candidate was invited to share his experience and express his needs: "nobody is helping

us” insisted the attendees grateful for UNDP/CDR/LMAC’s attention, while still suspicious: “many organization came to us to take information and later disappeared”. Most of the victims were injured while farming or leading their cattle and their economic situation is not enviable. However, the profile of the victims varied widely in terms of degree of injury, health conditions, age, level of education, occupation and income status, as well as in terms of personal challenges. Thus, the workshops confirmed the importance of treating the mine victims on a case by a case basis, as there are no homogenous groups. The needs can be summarized as follows:

- Vocational training in the field of: Computer IT, plumbing & electrical works, cellular phone repairing, secretariat
- Securing job opportunities
- Support to those who are already self-employed in order for them to expand their business through trainings in business management
- Support to those looking for self employment through trainings in business creation and entrepreneurship

Simultaneously, the focus groups highlighted the common needs per region; tried to find links with existing cooperatives and youth groups supported by the programme; as well as brought up the need for access to loans of victims.

On the other hand, the focus group had the effect of a group therapy where victims realized that others suffered from the same problems. It was an opportunity to talk in a safe environment about their distress and many recognized inside the LMAC center the mines that wounded them. General Roy fares , from the LMAC, finally concluded that priority should be given to children victims and encouraging them to pursue their education; the General immediately took action and found a private funding for a child who could not afford going to school.

## **F Youth Reintegration & Reconciliation**



As of year 2000, 32 youth groups were established by the UNDP programme in the South in the Kadas of Marjeyoun, Hasbaya and Bint Jbeil gathering youngsters from different confessions and political affiliations. Most of these youth are the “war generation” and had no relationships with other youth from different villages in the occupying zone. The groups served as safe places where the youngsters can meet, discuss issues of their concerns and plan activities for the benefit of the local communities. The new programme is extending this support for youth reconciliation geographically, extending coverage to new targeted kadas, and further anchoring and consolidating youth groups already established.

### **The objectives of those youth groups are:**

- Reinforcing youth's belonging, unity and teamwork
- Creating a platform for youth to identify their problems and arrive at common practical solutions
- Building the capacities of the youth and boost up their leadership and their capacity to form entities, and take initiatives for the benefit of their communities

The South programme works on developing and conducting trainings on various topics including conflict resolution, non-violence education, youth participation in local governance, gender and communication and leadership skills,



among other topics. Different youth members are joined in activities from various villages in the South, with different ideological, religious and political backgrounds, allowing an open and free forum for exchange of opinions. Various approaches are utilized such as summer camps, workshops, art, and peace through sports, among other tools. In order to enhance and encourage women participation in society, female youth members are specifically encouraged to participate in trainings and tools.

Additionally, unemployment has its detrimental effects on the youth sector. This, and several other factors are contributing to the migratory flow of youth to larger towns specifically to the overcrowded capital Beirut. Migration motives comprise the weakness of the higher education system, and the minimal social, entertainment facilities in the towns and villages of South Lebanon, especially for females. These two factors, unemployment and absence of social activities, have an apparent direct effect on the increased political mobilization and raised tension among youth. Youth's initiation to social work is mainly from the door of political parties, making them susceptible to a biased prospect of social integration. Thus, the programme is also encouraging youngsters through career guidance and vocational trainings. A need assessment of the youth and the labor market

have identified the topics of the vocational trainings that will be conducted in December 2010: the topics of business planning, sales & marketing, accounting and business English were prioritized.

Finally, in the absence of an official and sustainable reference and guidance for the youth, the programme has been encouraging youth members to get support from municipalities in their villages. This includes municipalities providing space within their premises for a youth center, as well as funding small projects for the youth, and encouraging them to volunteer in municipal organized activities. Therefore, the programme contributes to the empowerment of civil society on the long run.



## Youth Summer camp: Lebanese citizenship

UNDP Socio-Economic Programme for South Lebanon in partnership with the CDR concluded its five days youth summer camp that took place from the 19th to the 23rd of July 2010 in Chabrouh (Faraya). The camp brought together 80 youngsters from the youth groups that were established by the programme in the villages of the districts of Marjeyoun, Hasbaya, Bint Jbeil, Nabatiyeh and Tyre. The subject of the camp focused on the topic of citizenship including the concepts of identity,

responsibility, belonging, participation, democracy, advocacy, voluntarism, conflict resolution, discrimination, gender equality and environment protection.

The daily schedule included group discussions on the mentioned topics, in addition to sports and leisure activities. Youth were exposed to numerous interactive exercises that portray the importance of citizenship; a trip to the dam of Chabrouh was organized as well as sports competitions and a fun closing ceremony creatively organized by the youngsters.



It might be argued that many associations are conducting summer camps and that the concept of citizenship has been abused as a topic. However, the added value of the youth programme set by UNDP is that it is part of a long process and of continuous activities conducted since 2000 in the South. For instance, the trainers in the camp are members/ leaders from the youth groups established by the

programme; they have received intensive TOTs on training skills, leadership skills, conflict resolution and communication. This summer camp was a mean to practice the training skills they acquired. On the other hand, new youth groups and new members are smoothly mixed with members who already attended workshops and camps. Also, the summer camp becomes a platform where the topic of citizenship practiced throughout the year by the different youth groups is experienced in a more intense and collective manner.

Battoul, from the newly established youth group in Tyre, slept outside her house for the first time “when they divided us into groups and I found myself without my friends I called the field officer in charge of my group to tell her that I wanted to go home” but later “I barely stayed with my friends from Tyre”. Mohamad Ayyad, from Derdghaya, was afraid that the camp will be boring and that there will be lectures “I was not expecting to learn so much while having fun”. Hassan Chrem, from Houmine, mentioned that he did things he never did at home “cleaning the toilets

suddenly seemed like a fun task!". Maya, from Houla, testified that the "exercises conducted were interactive, the visuals and creative techniques used made the conclusions easy to understand". "Everybody got the chance to participate and give his point of view" added Ibrahim from Nabatyeh.

"The last card I use to represent myself is my Identity Card; I probably use more often my university card or my political party card" testified Bilal in one of the exercises about identity "I feel that I am more secure when I present my university's ID". When the youngsters were asked to imagine what would Lebanese do if they see a bird singing on a tree, after narrating the French, Italian and other countries scenarios, most of the participants had negative options including "asking which political party the bird was following" to decide accordingly what they will do. "The funniest and really impactful exercise was the one where we had to fit all the group on a flip chart paper that was getting smaller every stage", "we were carrying each other and trying to find solutions to fit everybody inside" enthusiastically said Youssef; the purpose of that exercise was to show that there was a solution to fit everybody in a country regardless of how small and diversified it is. During the session about the importance of voluntarism, many youngsters mentioned that they volunteer to "serve their communities", "to meet interesting people", "to improve their skills" and they agreed that their volunteer experience is a character building that could help on a professional level, and that voluntarism is a social responsibility they owe their country. Among other exercises, the youngsters learned lobbying & advocacy techniques when they had to decide if they should accept the decision of their mayor to destroy a youth center and build instead a factory that would generate employment to the inhabitant of the village.



During the last day of the camp youngsters seized every minute left of the camp and did not go to sleep "I wish the camp will never end" said Bana sadly, they invented plays, songs and dances for the fire camp ceremony. The rap song of Ali portrayed their feelings "my dream is to move forward, take part of the reconstruction of my country, regardless of unemployment and corruption..."



## The Rally paper by bike

After months of preparation the Tour in Sour rally paper by bike, organized by the youth group of Tyre newly established by UNDP, finally took place on the 25th of July at Beit El Madina. One hundred and fifty three participants were biking around Tyre city to discover through the questions and activities the beauty and the problems of Tyre.



The youth group of Tyre was established in November 2009 through the help of the municipality and recruitment through schools, NGOs, posters and websites. The diversity of the group who joined is an interesting mix: multi-confessional, multi-cultural, various educational level, Lebano- Palestinian, including people with special needs and disabilities. Following a brainstorming and strategic planning session youngsters identified the city's problems and challenges as well as the resources available in Tyre. Among the problems identified were:

- **Environment:** pollution, garbage as well as visual and noise pollution
- **Health:** youth smoking narguileh Road accidents especially with motor bikes
- **Tourism:** few internal tourism (people from other regions of Lebanon fear the south or have a wrong vision), in addition to low maintenance and guidance in tourist sites

- **Children rights:** few activities for children specially war affected children
- No facilities and integration of **disabled people**
- Lack of **awareness** on all the above mentioned issues

Thus, the youngsters decided to tackle those problems one by one throughout the year and launched their initiative through the rally paper as their initial activity. The objective of the rally paper was to introduce the newly established group to the inhabitant of the city; explain to people that the youngsters will be working on the above mentioned themes; recruit new members to the youth group; promote bicycles as a mode of transportation; and mainly tackle one of the problems identified: internal tourism by inviting NGOs and guests from all over Lebanon. The youth group learned throughout the process how to approach sponsors, how to organize events, how to market the event and invite people, and how to set the questions of the rally paper.



On the 25th of July, Tyre city was submerged by bikes. People wearing costumes supporting a certain cause were spread all over the city and involved the local community to answer the questions. Participants were diversified: NGOs, International NGOs, UNDP staff including UNVs, Live Lebanon and UNDP youth groups, the private sector, individuals and families from Tyre, Beirut and Broumana, and also teams formed by the municipality of Tyre and its members. Teams had to guess, through the pictures provided, key locations in the city where the youth group

was hiding with the questions sheets: the old port and souk, archeological sites, the old city and the public garden. While questions were about environmental issues in Tyre, road accidents, tourism, children's right, culture and traditions, religious diversity and integration of disabled people. Most of the questions and riddles could not be solved without the support of local people on the streets.



The winning team Ricerca e Cooperazione an Italianan NGO working on waste management in Tyre Kadaa, had the brilliant idea to set in a local coffee shop at the port and involve the fishermen in answering the questions. Nagham from Tyre is hoping that this event will make the inhabitant of Tyre realize that biking is an accepted mean of transportation for Lebanese women. Elias from Broumana was impressed by the beauty of the city *"I came here before but I discovered the city in a different and in depth manner"*. *"People of tyre are so open and friendly, they were inviting us to their houses and running to find the treasures we needed to win the game"* said Tania from the *"Pirate de Tyre"* team.

The day was concluded with a photo exhibition conducted by the youngsters of Qleileh and Tyre while the group of Tyre was compiling the results. The mayor of Tyre and the UNDP programme manager



in the South announced the three winning teams, who were gifted valuable gifts. All the gifts were related to Tyre city to make sure that the winners will continue experiencing the Tyrolian life (accommodation, traditional food, beach resorts and access to touristic sites). It is important to note that the event did not cost the youth group a penny! All the costs were covered by sponsors including the support of the municipality. That was a proof to the youngsters that they could conduct many events to support their city without financial resources; all they needed was an attractive idea, their will, enthusiasm and motivation!

Participant and the youngsters are eagerly looking forward for the Tyre youth group future events



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