

Planting Thyme in Zawtar Al Charkieh

Zawtar Al Charkieh, the southern village, highly relying on agriculture as a source of income, was severely affected by the July 2006 war that caused immediate damages to 90% of agricultural fields including lands contaminated by cluster bombs. Therefore, the farmers of the village who used to collect wild thyme, grind it and sell it for 8\$/kilo lost a considerable amount of income after the war and saw their livelihood deteriorate drastically.



Consequently, UNDP decided to support the agricultural cooperative of Zawtar Al Charkieh, an active cooperative that works on further developing its production and increasing the number of members. UNDP contributed in the plantation of seedlings in an area of 10,000 m² and provided machinery for thyme processing for a total amount of \$14,000.



“During the July 2006 war, this field was contaminated by cluster bombs. People used to come here to pick up thyme to sell it and earn their living” explained Hussein Soueidane, Head of Zawtar Al Charkieh cooperative.

According to Mr. Soueidane, more than 60 farmers and their family members in the village of Zawtar Al Charkieh benefited from this project which increased their income and improved their living conditions.

The cooperative chose to cultivate thyme, since it can be easily marketed, has a lot of demand and can be used for many purposes and in different forms: medical purpose, thyme syrup, grinded thyme ...

As studies showed the superiority of honey quality produced in the surroundings of thyme, the cooperative got 75 beehives in 2010. In 2011, the cooperative produced 862 Kgs of oregano and thyme and 165 Kgs of natural honey.

Several studies proved that the land in Zawtar Al Charkieh is fertile for planting thyme, and the oil extracted from this thyme was verified to be excellent in quality. In addition to that, thyme can be cultivated on the periphery of farmers' lands and the plantation of thyme can be done in parallel to the plantation of tobacco, thus farmers can benefit from two crops at the same time while using the same land.

