

When municipalities, cooperatives and youngsters work together

Since 2000, UNDP 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 cost 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. The cooperative intends to make this event a yearly activity.

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