

## **Executive summary**

### **I. Objectives and methodology**

The Consultation and Research Institute was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of the Displaced to conduct an evaluation of the Programme titled "Re-integration and Socio-Economic Rehabilitation of the Displaced". As specified in the Terms of Reference, the evaluation was intended to review; assess and analyze the objectives of the programme interventions; the impact of programme activities; sustainability of programme activities and achievements; difficulties and constraints faced in programme implementation; the adequacy of existing resources and management arrangements; and co-ordination mechanisms and resource mobilization. The evaluation mission was asked to assess the potential for replicating the programme elsewhere in the country, within same or similar conditions. The output of this evaluation will serve as an input into formulating a vision for the remaining period of the programme. It also opted for better orienting the programme, if necessary, to improve efficiency and targeting, as well as to maximise impact. The outcome of the evaluation will also assist the Programme in mobilizing resources for the remaining period of its life-time.

The methodology used in conducting the present evaluation was based on both desk review of existing document at UNRSRSD and field visits to selected localities that benefited from the Programme interventions.

### **II. Country and programme context**

The macro-economic framework within which the programme is operating is briefly assessed. Displacement was one of the major issues that needed to be solved after establishing peace agreement among ex-combatants. However, solving this dilemma was constrained by the fiscal, monetary and economic challenges. Despite the considerable achievements reported so far, mainly as to control of inflation, stabilization of exchange rate, and sustain of internal security and stability, the economic and fiscal policies resulted in several drawbacks that are halting further progress in developmental issues. For instance, during the second half of nineties, sharp slowdown in economic growth was reported, coupled with alarming growth in public debt that exceeded by far the level of GDP, in addition to the uncontrollable deficit in governmental budget. These imbalances will further disable the country from meeting the targets set forth to overcome the war hindrances, specifically the displacement issues.

Within this discouraging framework, the programme, subject of this evaluation, was introduced to support the interventions of the Ministry of Displaced, mainly in areas of social and economic community-based development. The geographic areas targeted by the programme include 3 cazas: Shouf, Alley and Baabda. Total allocated budget for the programme amounts to US\$ 2.750 million, funded by the Ministry of Displaced, Council of Development and Reconstruction, Norway Ministry of Social Affairs and UNDP.

## **II. Evaluation Findings**

### **1. Program achievements**

Support the reconciliation process for the returnees and residents: In many villages and pivots, the programme assisted the local communities in building and activating sports clubs and playgrounds to attract the returning youth. Also, within the same context, the programme equipped some of the clubs, cultural centers and associations with PC sets, audio-visual sets, service equipment, and sport equipment.

The programme also organized several 2-day camps for children in Mount Lebanon villages in cooperation with local NGOs (especially the Lebanese Red Cross). These camps brought together children from various ex-combating villages.

Also, in the context of youth activities, the programme also organized a youth camp in Ain Zhalta in 1998 that brought together around 50 participants from different political and communitarian backgrounds, with youth organizations. This camp stressed, among other issues, the issue of communication among youth, debates, and the basics for solving conflicts.

Furthermore, the programme, with the assistance of NGO's, organized other awareness campaigns at schools and in the villages with the assistance of municipalities, mayors, and school directors stressing issues related to the rights of children, public health, environmental concerns, and adolescence problems. Also, sports and entertainment activities were organized in the different pivots, gathering youth from various villages in joint sports festivals.

The programme further targeted teachers in public schools, in primary and secondary levels, to raise their awareness towards human concerns including human rights, conflict resolution, democracy, and local participation.

*Support the rehabilitation of the socio-economic sector in the region and help create new employment opportunities:*

**Agriculture:** The programme attempted to execute limited interventions to resolve, whenever possible, the economic development problems facing communities. As such, the agricultural sector was one of the major sectors addressed by the programme. It is worthwhile to note that the interventions of the programme were demand driven: whenever the local communities prioritized their need for an agricultural-related activity, the programme tried to satisfy this need to the extent possible given the limited budget availability. The projects implemented by the programme, in agricultural-related activities concentrated on the following: (a) rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure; (b) provision of equipment and agricultural inputs; (c) extension programmes and training sessions; and (d) on-line assistance to farmers. In terms of agricultural extension programmes, a number of training sessions were organised in most of the municipalities to train farmers on a variety of agricultural-related activities, including tropical fruit tree cultivation, olive oil trees harvesting, post-harvesting and oil quality, processing of grapes, and processing of figs. These sessions include training farmers on the use of seeds, pesticides, and other agricultural equipment, in addition to raising awareness regarding diseases. The programme also founded the green-line service in order to provide on-line assistance to the farmers in any agricultural problem that they may face, by collecting complaints via phone and providing solutions via specialists in related fields. Among the surveyed villages, this service was not found very helpful and hence was not heavily used by farmers.

**Health:** The programme provided some assistance in the field of health care services. Among the major achievements in this sector is the provision of medical equipment. In addition, in the health care context, the programme, with the assistance of NGO's, organized health awareness campaigns covering chronic health care issues such as osteoporosis, prevention of vagina and prostate cancer, alimentary hygiene and dental hygiene.

**Education:** The programme provided assistance to public schools, mainly in terms of equipment. The project equipped the majority public schools, within its geographic coverage, with computers, audio-visual illustrative equipment and other needed equipment.

*Mobilize and coordinate resources and establish an information system for a sustainable return process.*

The programme succeeded to some extent in coordinating with the different players interested in funding specific projects in the area, whether local and international NGO's and donors. The coordination mechanisms included, but were not restricted to guiding NGO's into the fields and sectors of interventions most needed; assisting in identifying the geographic zones for interventions; referring local communities to donors whenever the programme is not

able to participate in the project's implementation; and providing NGO's and donors with background demographic and socio-economic data on the different localities in the area of displacement. Needless to say, coordination is of great importance to avoid duplication of interventions in the same areas, and to better address the needs of the local communities.

### **III. Impact**

Despite the difficulties in assessing the impact of the Programme activities, one can note the following:

- People interviewed in some of the areas highly appreciated the outcome of the activities related to the reintegration and reconciliation process, summarizing it as a pull factor to their offspring to be back to their hometowns, and in bringing together youth from different communitarian backgrounds. However, getting higher impact in reconciliation issues requires repetitive organization of activities that focus on the same number of villages.
  
- In interventions related to socio-economic development, the impact was felt more by residents since most agricultural activities carried out are post-return activities (infrastructure, training, etc). However, one cannot deny that implemented projects had in some areas positive implications, mainly in villages that had no accessibility to irrigation water or agriculture roads. Despite their being very limited, activities implemented in the agricultural sector, could have paved the way for further developmental actions to be taken over by local communities. Projects implemented in the agriculture development context demonstrated a good impact, as deduced from interviewees, however general constraints facing the agriculture sector hinders such positive impact.
  
- In the education and health sectors, it is felt from community representatives that the programme interventions in this context were appreciated. Nevertheless, the programme could in no mean replace the government authorities responsible for health and education sectors.

### **IV. Replicability**

The replicability of the programme elsewhere in the country is viable. Although the area covered by the programme activities has some specific conditions, namely displacement, a major part of the programme activities is generic in nature and can be replicated in other underprivileged rural areas.

### **V. Mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and management**

The programme launched its operational activities which are based on local community proposals (municipalities after 1998 elections). The selection of projects takes place after discussing the project proposals and ensuring its feasibility and purposes. The role of the local representatives is crucial in determining the priority of the project, whenever several projects are suggested for the locality. The mechanisms employed by the programme to implement its activities are adequate. However, it is suggested that the programme intervenes slightly more in the selection criteria of projects, usually done by local authorities, to avoid serving personal interests and duplication of existing projects.

### **VI. Participation and Sustainability**

The municipality elections that took place after 1998 made it easier for the programme to find its local counterpart. As such, in many instances, the needed community cost sharing was

paid from the regular budget of the municipality, and not as direct contribution from the residents of the community or the beneficiaries of the project. It should be noted that community contribution does not need to be in cash, however, any in-kind contribution would be financially evaluated and accepted as a community share.

The sustainability of projects related to economic and social development, depends to a great extent on the transfer of the existing projects to local authorities.

## **VI. Recommendations**

The evaluation mission acknowledges that this programme is simply a programme with "limited means trying to fulfill endless wants". It is pretty difficult to pretend to have the right recommendations for such a programme especially because the programme under review is trying to play an important role in offsetting one of Lebanon's most difficult dilemma: displacement. The recommendations stressed mainly need for raising the programme budget, extension of its life time, emphasis on interventions related to reconciliation, capacity building of local partners, and implementing project serving the pivot or more than one village.