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ملحق مشروع تعزيز السِّلم الأهلي في لبنان

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Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon Project



Newsletter Issue 3

ملحق خاص
بمعرض من مشاريع تعزيز السلم الأهلي في لبنان
الذي أقيم للمرة الأولى في بيروت في 2013
الذي يهدف إلى تعزيز السلم الأهلي والتسامح



زيد بارود
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Lebanese NGOs join efforts to contribute to truth and reconciliation in the country

"This is not a normal program because the topics we are dealing with are deep and challenging. The focus is to go in depth together into discussing, speaking together what goes into healing, what are different experiences from Lebanon and from around the world. It's going to be a space for reflection, for learning from each other and also for really listening and sharing together," said Mr. Kai Brand-Jacobsen, internationally renowned trainer and Director of the Department of Peace Operations (PATRIR) who flew back again in March 2013 to facilitate the last NGO training on reconciliation and dealing with the past.

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Naji Said from DPNA explaining the different types of conflict

10 national NGOs, Permanent Peace Movement, Development for People and Nature Association, ALEF, Nahwa el Mouwatiniya (Towards Citizenship), Peace Initiative, Volunteers Without Borders, Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace, NGOs Platform of Saida, Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue, as well as Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training participated in the three days training program organized in Broumana.

During the training, participants acquired knowledge and skills about the spectrum of approaches to reconciliation and dealing with the past, reconciliation and healing in relation to transitional justice models, Lebanese societal, traditional and cultural approaches, challenges and risks, as well as civil society networks and campaigns in reconciliation and dealing with the past.

The participants were later joined by Lebanese experts who shared with them their lessons learnt in reconciliation, healing and dealing with the past in Lebanon.

In fact, UNDP Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon Project has been supporting the process of the establishment of a national civil society platform on civil peace since 2011, consisting of 10 national organizations, taking into account past experiences and emerging lessons learnt. As a result of the process support, the participating NGOs decided to identify their gathering as the “National Campaign for Truth and Reconciliation” and agreed on several concrete steps and activities that they would achieve by 2015.

After the several capacity building sessions in January and March, the NGOs have increased recognition and understanding of the role and contribution of civil society actors to reconciliation and healing within the country as well as greater cohesion within the group of participants together with increased mutual confidence, trust and relations amongst participants. They should be therefore better equipped for the work to come in preparation of the proposed campaign, and to better interact with all the organizations and initiatives that have already carried out important work on dealing with the past and promoted efforts for truth, memory and reconciliation.

Civil society organizations prepare to launch a national campaign on truth and reconciliation

A number of civil society organizations who have decided to establish a national civil society platform on civil peace taking into account past experiences and emerging lessons learnt. UNDP has been supporting this process since 2011 and as a result of the process, the participating NGOs decided to identify their gathering as the “National Campaign for Truth and Reconciliation” and agreed on several concrete steps and activities that they would achieve by 2015.

The campaign aims at reconsidering the past and memory of the Lebanese civil war and deducing lessons in order to achieve and strengthen civil peace in Lebanon and avoid future conflicts.

In consultation with various components of Lebanese society, participating organizations will work jointly on developing a national agenda for reconciliation, also making use of past local and international experiences. The following steps will be implemented leading up to a national reconciliation conference in 2015.

1. Research the **causes, events, and outcomes** of the Lebanese civil war and recurrent conflicts in Lebanon.
2. Implement a **field research** with various sectors of Lebanese society to understand their perception of the causes, lived experience, and impact of the civil war in Lebanon as well as experiences in remembering and commemorating it.
3. Take stock of **international reconciliation experiences** and possibility of its application in Lebanon.
4. **Consult with a wide spectrum of segments of Lebanese society** in a process that leads to the development of the national agenda including: political parties, syndicates and workers unions, families affected by the civil war, professional unions and associations, cooperatives, bankers, youth both employed and unemployed, and ex-fighters.
5. **Organize a national reconciliation conference**, which could take on different formats, including a nation-wide conference, regional conferences across Lebanon, televised public sessions, round tables, etc.
6. **Support civil society initiatives** on peace building, especially those organized in the face of emergency responses.
7. **Exchange experiences between participating organizations** about peace building activities and projects they are implementing, including challenges faced and lessons learnt.

Journalists' Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon, a fruitful collaboration between editors-in-chief from different media outlets

21 editors-in-chief from various media outlets sat together on March 7th 2013, to discuss the content of the Journalists' Pact which has been elaborated in direct consultation with them aiming at strengthening civil peace in Lebanon.

The discussion session which was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, was an opportunity for the editors-in-chief and senior media staff to share freely their views on the first draft of the Journalists' Pact written by Dr. Mahmoud Tarabay, an expert in media studies.

The participants discussed their observations on the articles of the Pact while working in groups: TV, radio, newspapers, and websites. In fact, it was an achievement to have rival media outlets sitting together on the same table working as a group for the betterment of the country's media situation. During the sessions, representatives from the Ministry of Information, the President of the National Media Council and the Editors' Association were also present.

Following the consultations and based on the recommendations of the editors-in-chief on the pact's content, the editors-in-chief reviewed several times different versions of the pact, adding their comments leading to the final version.



Editors-in-chief and key media figures together discussing the Journalists' Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon

An official launch of the pact will be held on June 25, 2013 under the patronage of H.E Minister of Information, Mr. Walid Daouk, and the presence of UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Robert Watkins, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst as well as journalists, reporters and key local media figures.

It is worth noting that the project took rather an unconventional approach in selecting the editors-in-chief adopting a long-term participatory approach, ensuring their full involvement and engagement in the process.

In this regard, the project visited 34 directors/chairman of board of every media institution in Lebanon to get them involved in the process, discuss with them their opinion regarding the pact and benefit from their comments for the elaboration of the draft and ask them to appoint a media focal point in relation to the initiative.



List of participating media institutions

Newspapers

Annahar
Assafir
Al Mustaqbal
Al Akhbar
Al Joumhouria
Addiyar
Al Balad
L'Orient Le Jour
The Daily Star
Al Anwar
El Shark
Aliwaa

TV

Tele Liban
Future TV
LBCI
OTV
NBN
NTV
MTV
Al Manar TV

Radio Stations

Sawt lebnen Ashrafieh
Radio Liban
Radio Orient
Sawt el shaab
Radio Liban Libre
Sawt Lebnen Dbayeh
Sawt el mada
El Nour Station

websites

National News Agency
Al Markazia
Lebanon Files
El Nashra
Now Lebanon
El Modon Electronic newspaper

UNDP and EU survey peace and reconciliation efforts jointly promoted in the North

While 25 youth from Meshmesh were working in groups to solve a case of conflict during a training session, Mr. Robert Watkins UNDP Resident Representative and Mr. Maciej Madalinski, representing Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, arrived yesterday March 17, 2013 to the premises of the municipality of Meshmesh to participate in one of the closing events in the North under the framework of UNDP's Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon Project funded by the European Union.

The training session brought together youth from Meshmesh and the surrounding regions to sensitize them on concepts of collective memory, war, reconciliation, peace building, conflict transformation through non-violent means and acceptance of the "other". This activity falls under the initiative "The Bus Takes the Podium: Voyages into Lebanon's history and its people" implemented by UMAM Documentation and Research which received a grant from UNDP and EU.

"It's an honor to be here," said Mr. Watkins explaining that last year "I had the pleasure to commemorate the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War by launching the new Bus initiative", and today I am here to close it."

Since April 2012, a mobile bus equipped with UMAM's archives on the civil war, which include diaries, media coverage, databases of victims and missing persons, as well as pictures, clippings, posters and slogans, has been touring different regions of the country. During the tour, citizens of all ages have been engaged in activities appropriate with the nature of the stops and the age of participants, such as movie screenings, sensitization sessions on peace building, war and memory, and games, among others.

Mr. Madalinski expressed that he is "privileged to take part in this program which brings back memories which are not always pleasant" stressing on the importance of striving not to forget the past and the bitterness of wars.



"The Bus Takes The Podium" stop in Meshmesh-Akkar

Both Mr. Watkins and Mr. Madalinski continued their tour in the North and headed next to Al Manar University of Tripoli where they joined 30 university students for a screening and discussion session on identity. With UNDP and EU's financial support, Search for Common Ground has been organizing awareness-raising screening session, directly linked to the Team, a 13 episodes drama series aired on LBC TV evolving around a football team representing the various communities of Lebanon.

It extends the themes of acceptance of the "other" by exposing youth to positive messages and behavior models that foster acceptance, mutual understanding, civic participation and violence reduction.

"We are trying through the episode of The Team which you will watch today, to bring together communities to work on commonalities instead of differences", said Mr. Watkins, while Mr. Madalinski emphasized the importance the EU attached to supporting these initiatives, hoping that they will bear fruits for Lebanon in the long-term.

Spreading a culture of peace through sports at Haigazian University

“Sport has a significant role in promoting social integration. It is a powerful tool in strengthening social ties and networks. It can promote ideals of peace, fraternity, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance and justice,” explained a member in the Peace Building Committee at Haigazian University during an event the club had organized on the role of sports in peace building on March 26, 2013.

During the event, prominent basketball player Fadi Al Khatib who is the captain of the Lebanese National Basketball Team along with Mazen Ramadan, Country Coordinator of an international organization called Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA) and FIFA Football Match Commissioner, discussed with the students the importance of sports in promoting peaceful coexistence and tolerance among different Lebanese factions.



The panel during the peace through sports events

“Sport is the best tool to bring people together and to promote peace. The children learn that it is normal to play with ‘the others’ – and they show this to the older generation,” said Ramadan. Moreover, he explained that sports contributes highly in building the personality of the individual, creates social bonding and increases the sense of team building.

Throughout his extensive experience in basketball, Al Khatib explained that in sports “no one cares who is who, what his religion is or even which religious or political faction will rule the country.” The most important thing is to cooperate and “put aside differences in order to achieve the objective which is winning the game”, he added.

One famous experience in showing that sports is a tool to promote peace is the friendly football match which was coordinated by Ramadan during which Lebanese political rivals played as a team. The game was on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War. Ramadan expressed that the game “broke the ice” between rival ministers and parliamentarians and created a friendly atmosphere among each other, “at least for a period of time.”

Peace Building Club members enhance their inter-personal skills

Six Peace Building Club members from USJ, Haigazian, AUST, BAU and AUL were selected to take part in a two-day workshop with the German International Cooperation on “intra-personal skills in conflict transformation” in March 2013. The workshop brought together students who are either actively working in the field of conflict transformation and nonviolence or who are interested in this field and would like to discover more of the attitudes and behaviors in conflictive situations.



Participants pose for a group photo with the organizers of the training

Although UNDP is no longer providing financial support to the Clubs, it has been putting the student in contact with different organizations in the field. As such, this has been an opportunity for the club members to dialogue, exchange and explore their own communications styles, their style of behavior in conflict situations and ways how each one of them can transform situations of power into situations of peace.

It is hoped that the club members will continue to participate in trainings and workshops on conflict resolution and peace building as well as become more aware of their role in fostering civil peace in Lebanon.

Peace Building skills development trainings for teachers from Wadi Khaled, Mount Lebanon and Beirut

The Project is currently working on improving social cohesion in border communities impacted by the Syrian crisis, namely in Wadi Khaled, as well as in Mount Lebanon and Beirut in response to the escalation of tensions reported in the region between Lebanese and Syrians, visible mainly inside schools used also by Syrian refugees' kids. The Project is working specifically on integrating peace building into formal and non-formal educational channels. As such, the Centre for Active Citizenship and For Development, have been training and sensitizing more than 80 teachers, students and school administrations on peace building concepts since April 2013. The trainings have been fruitful as well as encouraged change in behavior and attitudes.



A group of teachers from Wadi Khaled during one of the training sessions

Success Story

In her own words, Wafa' Naaman – Teacher of French Language at Al Awada Public School in Wadi Khaled, 8th grade.

At the end of the first training day, I realized that the training was completely different than the ones I had previously participated in; and that is how the story began.

On the second day, the trainer asked us about the punishment tools we adopt in class. We informed him that we have the stick and the classroom newspaper. In fact, the latter is a note book on which we write on a daily basis, the names of the outstanding students and those who do not behave well in class; and any student whose name is in the "naughty" category is to be punished by the principal, each in a way.

This came to a shock to the trainer. He did not believe that these tools still exist in our Lebanese schools. I felt ashamed of myself when I saw his reaction and at that exact moment, I decided to stop using these tools.

In fact, the next day I entered the classroom and discussed with the students about a deal we were going to take on from now on: we will not use the punishment tools and we will replace them with rewards for any good and positive behavior inside the classroom, on condition that students prepare their assignments, lessons and ask for permission to speak. The students were excited about this news and promised me that they will abide by the agreement. That is when I decided to send the stick to the principal. There was an obvious change in behavior after taking that step; students were eager to learn during the French class and proud that they do not have the stick in their classroom.

Municipalities of Wadi Khaled supported to manage conflicts in the region

In its continuous effort to support local-led peace-building initiatives in conflict prone areas of Lebanon, the UNDP Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon project extended its activities to Wadi Khaled, in North Lebanon, on the borders with the Syrian Arab Republic. The long absence of public institutions and the tribal nature of the society created many challenges for local communities of the 22 villages of the valley.



With the beginning of the crisis in Syria in March 2011, thousands of refugees from across the borders stayed with Lebanese families.

This resulted in an added load of the 8 newly established municipalities in Wadi Khaled, which already lack so many technical skills. “All of a sudden we had to deal with a huge humanitarian crisis that added to our own economic and societal problems,” said one of the Al Amayer municipal council members. In cooperation with “Beyond for Reform and Development” company, the project implemented a series of workshops for the members of the municipalities’ councils in the area aiming at building their capacities.

The first cycle of the training sessions took place in April 2013 which aimed at providing skills and knowledge on internal management techniques and relations with official authorities and international organizations. During the final session, twenty members from all municipalities of Wadi Khaled shared their concerns and needs with the Director General of the Administrative and Local Councils at the Ministry of Interior Mr. Khalil Hajal, representing the Minister of Interior Mr. Marwan Charbel in an open and honest discussion session.

“This is the first time we feel that the state is listening to our needs and concerns. Because of this dialogue session, we are able now to communicate better with our central government.”

The 2nd cycle of the training sessions took place in May which aimed at providing skills on crisis management and conflict resolution to further build the local capacities. In a signed letter participants including mayors and mukhtars from Wadi Khaled expressed their appreciation to UNDP, thanking the project on building their skills and helping them better communicate their structured needs with their communities, the donors’ community and the state.

“By giving us the tools and information about the internal management of the municipalities, and information on our roles and responsibilities and the rules and laws of municipal work you are filling a huge gap created over the past years.”

Journalists from different media outlets collaborate to write about civil campaigns in a joint supplement with Annahar and As-safir

Lebanon is characterized by its powerful and vital civil society which has a long, proud history in addressing socio-economic, legal and political challenges facing the country, as well as in safeguarding and promoting human rights. Its importance resides in the fact of being inclusive of all the country's political, religious, class and cultural differences.

“Civil society movements are not only an opportunity to respond to current and important issues that affect our lives, but also a mean to mitigate potential conflicts as well as a catalyst for the formulation and implementation of laws in modern society” said Mr. Robert Watkins, UNDP Resident Representative, in his editorial in the Strengthening civil peace in Lebanon joint supplement.

This supplement, published concurrently with Annahar and As-safir newspapers on March 22nd 2013, shed the light on the civil movements and on a number of campaigns launched by various Lebanese civil society organizations and actors. In the second issue of this joint news supplement, the UNDP “Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon” project funded by the European Union, has collected 10 written contributions from different newspapers and websites around the different civil campaigns currently being launched in the country.

Journalists from Annahar, As-safir, Al Balad, Al Mustaqbal, Al Hayat and Al Liwaa newspapers, Al Modon electronic newspaper and Now website have engaged in strengthening the idea of civil movement through their written contributions.

Who launched the campaign? How, when and why was it launched? Who participated in its activities? What are its main activities? What are the current and future plans of this campaign? What are the constraints and the problems faced by these campaigns? What is the importance of such civil movements in strengthening civil peace in Lebanon?

These are some of the many questions that the journalists tackled in their articles.

In this regard, Mr. Watkins explained that the civil society is often considered as the conscience which monitors and holds government, business and other decision makers accountable, while defending the human rights of those who often lack a voice in decision making.



For Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, "it is very crucial to know what the strengths of civil society organizations are and how they can be strengthened more and more and what are the lessons learned from the Arab spring."

Ambassador Eichhorst hoped that the supplement can be a way forward for a better civil mobilization. In addition to the print distribution of more than 28 000 copies with Annahar and As-safir, the supplement was highly disseminated and circulated on the social media networks and on the UNDP Lebanon website on the following link: <http://www.undp.org.lb/communication/PeaceBuilding/index.cfm>



UNDP Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon Project

The UNDP Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon project, implemented with financial support from the European Union, addresses the underlying causes of conflict and tensions in Lebanon. The partnership between UNDP and the EU started in 2011 and aims at strengthening civil peace in Lebanon. The project creates “safe spaces” for local identity groups to discuss their concerns openly and enhance mutual understanding of the “other”. It aims at enhancing social cohesion between civil society (youth, educators, media, and NGOs) and relevant local public actors (municipal council members and mukhtars) at the local, community and national levels.

In this respect, the UNDP Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon project does not only aim at building peace and strengthening dialogue at the local and national levels by promoting collective memory, but also at empowering traditional and alternative media and at developing local level peace building strategies. Dialogue will be strengthened through networking among youth at universities and through the establishment of a cross-political, multi-confessional civil society platform that addresses civil peace in Lebanon.

For More Information



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