

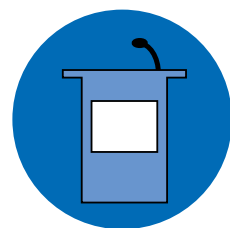
“Peace Building in Lebanon” project’s newsletter

ISSUE N°10 – DECEMBER 2015 - QUARTER 4



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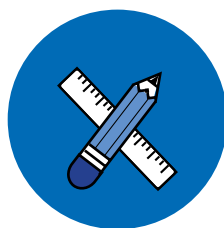


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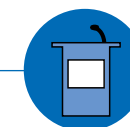


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UNDP-Supported Local Peace Committees Exchange Best Practices in Dealing with the Repercussions of the Syrian Crisis



In a room full of 100 participants from the Bekaa, North and South Lebanon, Mr. Luca Renda, UNDP Country Director, congratulated members of socio-cultural and socio-economic committees for peacefully addressing challenges and conflicts in their regions.

"Because of the work you are doing as local actors within your municipalities in regards to addressing the new challenges caused by the influx of Syrian displaced to your areas, you are giving a model of peace building and coexistence for the country, the region and even the world" said Renda.

Gathered in a two-day retreat in Broumana, Metn, on the 20 and 21st of November 2015, participants were able to assess their work, share their experiences and learn from the other socio-cultural and socio-economic committees coming from all over Lebanon.

These committees were established together by local authorities and local actors, under the supervision of municipalities in different areas such as Mashta Hassan, Mashta Hamoud, Akroum, Halba, Berqayel, in Akkar; and Bar Elias, Majdel Anjar in Bekaa Bebnine, Terbol, Saadnayel, Baysariyeh, Sarafand and Chebaa.

As a result of a long process of support offered by the UNDP "Peace Building in Lebanon" in partnership with "BRD-Beyond Reform and Development" and with the financial support of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the EU through UNHCR, these committees were able since September 2014, to address the existing challenges as well as those caused by the impact of the Syrian crisis on host communities.

In this context, "Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS)" were designed based on the analysis of local conflicts and the specificities of each region, which lead to the creation of these structures.

For members coming from southern to northern Lebanon, and meeting for the first time in one place, the event was an opportunity to benefit from lessons learned and experiences across the different regions.

Representatives of 17 committees were proud and happy to discuss the activities achieved in every region. From organizing a kermes for 1000 Syrian and Lebanese kids in Sarafand, a poetry reciting event in Akroum, to breaking down stereotypes by organizing a Lebanese-Syrian dialogue session in Majdel Anjar, and launching an economic competition for economic pilot projects in Terbol among other areas, these activities were considered by the different communities as positive initiatives promoting social stability and enhancing mutual understanding of the "Other".

Lea Saghbini from the Terbol socio-economic committee explained that the competition launched in Terbol will help create job opportunities for the residents and empowered youth economic capacities. Socio-economic committees act as incubators for social innovation at the local level through encouraging local residents to present innovative business ideas that would promote local socio-economic development and therefore contribute to reducing tensions;



creating a network of potential local investors who are willing to invest in those ideas.

Tohama Ghader, from the Chebaa joint socio-cultural and socio-economic committee, explained how Lebanese and Syrian youth danced together during the launch of the committee in the area rejecting all kinds of discrimination and stereotyping. In addition to organizing activities, socio-cultural committees work on establishing a monitor to track violations of human rights, conflicts and incidents in the regions.

Participants eagerly talked about their activities without forgetting to call for funding to pursue their upcoming

activities. They also raised the issue of voluntary-based commitment in the committees. “Commitment on the long run is essential in taking part in the activities of the committees”, said Haydar El Sheikh from the Berqayel committees.

“I hope that other organizations focusing only on Syrian displaced can benefit from this project’s approach. Dealing equally with Lebanese-Syrians relations on the local level should be contagious. The problem is mutual”, concluded Bayan Itany, a Syrian participant in the Majdel Anjar socio-cultural committee.

Environment-Friendly Projects Leading the Way to Peace in Mashta Hassan and Mashta Hammoud



“We have to let go of our small problems in order to have a solid economy and state” said Mr. Hamza El Ahmad mayor of Mashta Hassan in Akkar, North Lebanon talking about the economic situation in his area.

On their way to saving the fragile economy in Mashta Hassan and Mashta Hammoud, the municipalities backed up by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project launched their socio-economic committee on October 26th, 2015 funded by the Department for International Development (UKDFID), with the technical support of “BRD – Beyond Reform and Development. The launch was an opportunity to announce a youth-oriented economic competition which is a way to involve young innovative individuals by offering them funding to their proposed business ideas that can employ locals and bring revenue to the economy.

In the presence of young and old Lebanese and Syrian residents from Mashta Hassan and Mashta Hammoud, local key figures and leaders, municipal members, NGOs and financial institutions’ representatives discussed the goals of the committee and the competition.

The socio-economic committee is part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS). It was established by local leaders and actors, under the supervision of the municipalities, and as a result of a long process supported by UNDP.

The Mechanisms address the existing challenges and conflicts as well as those caused by the impact of the Syrian



crisis on host communities. The committees are the cornerstones towards solving issues related to the crisis in Mashta Hassan and Mashta Hammoud.

The socio-economic committee members in the Mashtas decided to create and maintain a socio-economic incubator at the Mashta Hassan municipality’s public library where local entrepreneurs will be able to access services and benefit from the space to develop their business ideas. Committee members stressed on their availability to support any project that can strengthen the local economy.

Mr. Samir Neaimeh, a resident of Akkar explains “this committee is proving that successful projects can take place here, which will hopefully prevent the immigration of our youth.”

Participants showed commitment and pride in the peacebuilding process as opposed to the conflicts happening in their areas. Zeid Hamzeh, local actor from Mashta Hassan and Mashta Hammoud, described this initiative as a revolutionary one, transporting the community from passive to active.

As another sign of support offered by the municipal socio-economic committee to creative innovators, the launch event was followed by a recycled art gallery prepared by Noha Slayman, a Syrian displaced living in Mashta Hassan. The mayor and rest of attendees who rushed after the launch to discover all the recycled works of art, found it impressive and a pioneering activity that will hopefully initiate similar projects by others, especially that it is environment-friendly and much needed these days as an approach to reduce waste.

Participatory Leadership Changing Minds in West Bekaa

Realizing the importance of developing local communities, the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project has implemented workshops all over Lebanon to train and support local key actors.

UNDP consultant Mr. Fadi Abi Allam started the training as usual with a hope voiced to all participants “revenge is the first sign to weakness, but forgiveness is the biggest sign of power.” With this, the last day of the workshop titled “Conflict resolution and participatory leadership – Project design” started. “Participatory leadership is a sustainable tool to empower successful organizations and yield development and change by involving “other” people in resolving problems”, he adds.

“This is one of the most benefiting workshops we as municipal members attended. The way we used to write a project proposal was so arbitrary. We are adopting now a more scientific and serious approach which leads us to dealing professionally with funding institutions,” said Mr. Fawzi Sati,



Kamed Al-Lawz deputy mayor regarding his participation in the workshop in Bekaa. Mr. Sati, along with 22 participants and committee members from Swairy, Rawda, Kamed El Loz and Kefraya have participated in a three-cycle training



“The participatory leadership that we were trained on was successful and different from how we used to handle problems. It taught us to find a third neutral party when resolving problems”

from September 28th till October 13th 2015.

Funded by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW, participants benefited from communication skills training, team-building, planning, project proposal writing and design and budgeting among others.

Mr. Mhamad Khaled Al-Sayyed, Rawda Intermediate Public School principal also found this training helpful “my role as a school principal has allowed me to apply what I have

learned on conflicts amongst students. The participatory leadership that we were trained on was successful and different from how we used to handle problems. It taught us to find a third neutral party when resolving problems.”

In order to have successful communities, committee members who are now key actors in their areas need to acquire certain skills to help them convene their community. Research has shown that community leaders can be helped to organize and develop their communities. People must be involved in the decision-making process, strategy setting, procedure development, and problem solving, which are the communicated skills that constitute “Participatory Leadership.”

These trainings resulted after the preceding phases of conflict assessment and analysis with the committees and will be followed by in-depth coaching on the village level in order to tackle personalized local issues and needs through social, cultural and economic mechanisms for social stability. This cycle of conflict resolution is being adapted in many other areas as well; from northern to southern Lebanon.



The UNDP “Peace building in Lebanon” project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education aims at integrating peace building and violence-free concepts in school environments. The violence-free schools activity is applied through sensitizing schools’ community members on peace building and nonviolence and work with committees formed in each school and composed of school principals, teachers, students and parents on behavioral code of conducts. The last phase involve designing and implementing related physical and nonphysical activities in the different schools.

Funded by Mexico through the UNHCR and in partnership with “CAC – Center for Active Citizenship” and “For Development”, the “Peace Building in Lebanon” project implemented the Violence-Free schools activity since March 2015 in 15 intermediate public schools in North, West and Central Bekaa that host displaced Syrian students. The project is also launching a similar intervention in 15 public schools in Mount Lebanon in 2016.

The Violence-Free schools activity revolves around promoting tolerance and acceptance of the “other”, especially in public schools hosting Syrians and Lebanese students.

Students, teachers and parents were trained on topics related to peace building, conflict resolution, dealing with differences. Facilitated sessions were organized to support smaller committees in each school developing codes of conduct, containing key principles and values to promote nonviolence in the school environment. These committees were also supported to come up with list of activities, both soft and hard, that would promote nonviolence and help in reducing tensions inside schools.

The activities that were selected by the committees in each school were implemented. Physical and non-physical, the developed projects varied between entertaining, educational and infrastructural activities. The non-physical activities included painting and graffiti workshops for young students, kermesses, and educational conference. The physical activities included rehabilitation of classes, playgrounds, common areas, bathrooms, purchasing of equipment, that were found relative to maintain a safe and peaceful school environment.

Lebanese and Syrian Students in Zahleh Reject Violence Through Music and Painting



Zahleh First Intermediate Public school was one of the 15 public schools in Bekaa that completed its Violence Free Schools related activities, with the support of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project.

Mexican consul Antonio Cruz accompanied by the UNHCR and the UNDP Bekaa visited the school in Zahleh on 20 November 2015.

Lebanese and Syrian students welcomed their visitors with celebratory music. At the same time, painting and art activities were taking place on the second floor classes.



“The children are reflecting their needs and concerns through peaceful means like art and painting” expressed consul Antonio Cruz, pleased to see the behavioral Code of Conduct on the walls of the school, hoping it will be applied in order to keep the school safe.

“I want my school to be the most colorful in town”, “I want to sing everyday” were some of the students’ words during their painting session.

“Our school and students are in much need of such support. We hope that the partnership between us and the UNDP continues.” said Mrs. Janette Saker vice principal of the school.

The violence-free schools initiative was completed in Zahleh. Yet, the peacebuilding and tolerance skills carried by the teachers and students throughout their trainings, will help similar projects surface.

Few days earlier, in Iaat Intermediate Public school, a graffiti session with artist Mohamad Mhanna took part on November 4th 2015 and involved 24 Lebanese and Syrian students over a few days.

“We painted the truth on our school’s walls. We expressed that we should defend our human rights” -

Abbas Sherif, 8th grader at Iaat public school



“The writing on the wall here shows that harsh words hurt worse than physical violence and that we shouldn’t discriminate between Lebanese and Syrians, we are friends” - Firas Mhanna, 8th grader at Iaat public school



Lebanese and Syrian students enjoyed a day full of entertaining activities at Housh Nabi public school on November 4th 2015. Part of the non-physical violence free schools initiative, the children played and shared moments during these organized school



War Stories Wrapped with a Human Touch



“How did you feel when you were holding guns during the Lebanese civil war?” asks Farah Wardani, the audience of ex-Fighters, youth and media gathered in the crowded space of AltCity in Hamra, on Saturday 16th of October, and for 3 consecutive Saturdays.

“Happy” said Samar, “powerful” added Assaad, and “afraid” whispered Omar. “I wanted to stay alive, to survive, to protect my people” stressed Paul.

Farah, a facilitator from the “Live Lactic Culture” NGO (Laban), tried to listen to people’s reactions on her question. She even went further in asking the audience to share their stories, as part of the “War Stories project”. In cooperation with the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project and with the financial support of Norway, Fighters for Peace (FFP) NGO commissioned Laban, as an improvisational theater organization, to train 10 high school and university students from different social and religious backgrounds in “playback theater” technique to make a performance about the Lebanese civil war.

“Shooting might have stopped, but war continues nowadays in many aspects” said Ziad Saab, ex-fighter from FFP NGO, at the beginning of the play, “I invite you to share your stories about the civil war, and to check together how the young performers will transform these stories into a peaceful art.”

For about two hours, the audience was able to share funny yet bitter and sad stories of Lebanese civil war they have managed to survive.

Ex-fighters and youth participants told many interesting stories, but the story of Abboudi, a young displaced Syrian, whose mother died in Syria when he was in Lebanon, was the most impressive one. “I believe every Lebanese can relate to this story, he said, when you lose someone without being able to see him for the last time”.

While Abboudi was speaking, some people started crying, touched by his experience.

“I used to think that war is a beautiful adventure... You can skip classes, hold guns and be powerful, but when you hear stories of ex-fighters telling you how they regret fighting, and how many lives they have lost during war, you change your mind” said Ahmad, a young student from the audience.

The impact of this project was visible on the actors who participated in the play - coming from different backgrounds, with no idea about how the war could have been back then-, on the ex-fighters and on the audience at the same time. They all were impressed by the stories exchanged. Ex-fighters were happy that people are listening to them, and youth were benefiting from every single advice.

“Lebanese people, when remembering war, they keep on repeating “let’s remember it so we don’t repeat it”, concluded Farah before adding “maybe in this project, we can remember it in a good day, in its human aspect. Maybe when we hear the story about a mother and her son, about two lovers who managed to survive under the bombs, or a story on how careless and adventurous the fighters were, we can learn from it more, because it touches us deep inside.”

“I believe every Lebanese can relate to this story. When you lose someone without being able to see him for the last time”



Theater as an Alternative for Conflict “Sakakine” Play Roams Lebanon



Fourteen young Lebanese and Syrian actors performed in Beirut after roaming Lebanon, to impart a social message of peace as part of a play titled “Sakakine.”

“Sakakine” (Knives) is a play directed by Ali Dia and produced by YNCA (Young Network for Civic Activism). Promoting social stability and respect of differences, local NGO YNCA is creating an alternative space to gather Lebanese and Syrians. The play was shown on 14 and 15 November 2015 at Beit El Fan theater in Tripoli, North Lebanon and Gazza theater in Bekaa, following two shows in Marjaayoun last February.

The play is supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project with the financial contribution of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW.

“With more than 40 days of extensive work and rehearsals, we were able to see a difference in the behavior of the Lebanese and Syrian actors. At first, Lebanese and Syrians separated themselves” said Dany Kalakech, executive manager of YNCA before adding that “this long road broke all barriers. We no longer see small isolated groups; they are one team of friends now. It is not by accident that the project was developed in a time when we need solidarity.” Also speaking of the play’s goal, president of YNCA Leila

Serhan, said that “these kinds of projects are effective in bringing the Lebanese society back together.” She explains “there were certain social disconnections in the Lebanese community before the Syrian crisis. Positive initiatives like “Sakakine” succeeded at gathering Lebanese from North to South with Syrians in one space.”

For Ali Dia “this play is some sort of therapy to overcome the ongoing problems between Lebanese and Syrians. I think we managed to treat and display the reality as it is, without exaggeration.”

The actors let go their prejudgments and shared the stage in front of more than 300 multicultural attendees. “I thought Lebanese were so different. But after rehearsing for so long with them, I know now that we have so much in common. I no longer feel like a stranger in Lebanon” said Souhaib El Khatib, Leading Syrian actor in “Sakakine”. His fellow Lebanese actor, Ali Bitar, also said “it is wonderful performing in front of different audiences, their feedback keep us going. This play helped me accept ‘others’ and make new honest friendships.”

YNCA believes that theater can be a transparent alternative for conflicts as it provides a common ground for people to meet and share their side of the story without barriers.

“Sakakine” was also shown on November 30th 2015 in Metro Al Madina Theater, Beirut.

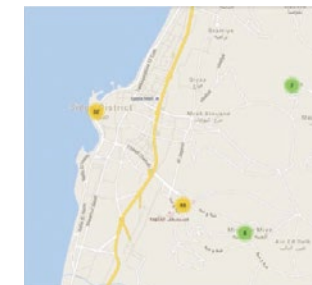


Conflict Mapping and Analysis

The Conflict Mapping and Analysis project is an initiative by Lebanon Support in collaboration with the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project funded by DFID and LRF-Germany. It is implemented and developed by Lebanon Support and aims at providing different partners involved in peace-building, humanitarian and stabilization activities

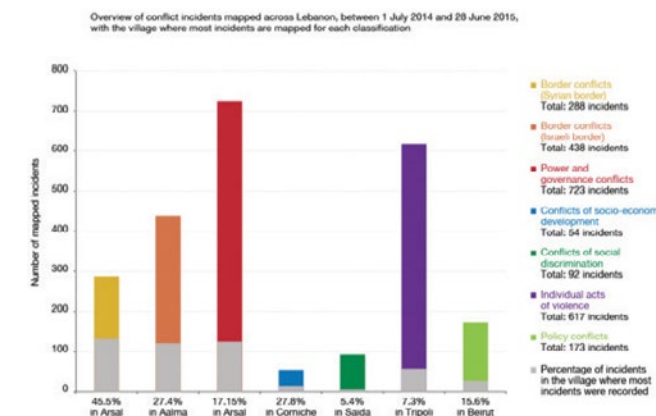
in the country with accurate data and relevant information on areas or actors of involved in conflicts. It also provides a sophisticated, impartial and pragmatic understanding of the inner workings of tracked conflicts, the specific underlying social fabric, the political minefields, as well as the opportunities for positive action.

1- Conflict Analysis Digest, May 2015: Spatial Fragmentation and rise in poverty. The conflict context in Saida



This report provides an overview of conflict instances in Lebanon between July and March 2015 as well as a case study on Saida. The case study provides a contextual and analytical summary of the conflict in the region of Saida, south of Lebanon, with a focus on spatial struggles and poverty growth. It describes the main conflict actors and how they have historically contributed to the shaping of conflictual dynamics in Saida from the fifties until today. Findings highlight that while most observers and media attention are focusing on the “radical Islamist danger,” stakeholders and social actors in the city perceive the most pressing threats to be notably related to social factors, including the density of the population, spatial fragmentation, and rise in poverty.

2- Conflict Analysis Digest, August 2015: Politics of security, discourses of fear and economic fatigue: the conflict dynamics in Matn



This second conflict analysis digest provides an updated overview of conflict instances up to end of June 2015, providing a full year of data analysis. As shown in the graph, most mapped conflict incidents classified as “power and governance” are occurring in Aarsal, Bekaa. Aarsal is also the region where most “Syrian border conflicts” are reported. Most “individual acts of violence” are being mapped in Tripoli, which shows an ongoing unrest in the Northern city but likewise the relatively low percentage downplays the general impression of open conflict in the city. Not surprisingly most “policy conflicts” and socio-economic protests are mapped in Beirut as the governance, administrative, and political center.



The report also provides an analytical summary of dynamics in the Matn area of Mount Lebanon. This report sheds light on the main actors, topics of contestation and conflict and its historical becoming as well as current expressions.

Upcoming: The conflict context in Beirut: the social question, mobilizations cycles, and the city's securitization

The final report of the first phase of conflict mapping and analysis project focuses on Beirut. The report seeks to shed light on the main actors, topics of contestation, conflict and mobilization in its historical becoming as well as current expressions. The report includes a special focus on the social question, subsequent political and social mobilization, gender issues, the securitization of the city, as well as the interactions between the Lebanese host community and

A special focus lies on the relationship between the Lebanese host community and Syrian refugees and its development within the last four years (since 2011).

Syrian refugees and their unfolding within the last four years (since 2011). The report specifically demonstrates that the new regulations imposed by the state on working conditions and residence permits for Syrians constitute an incisive rupture altering the lives of Syrians in Lebanon in a considerable way.



Free of the Discourse of Hatred, Lebanese and Syrians Discuss the 9th Issue of the Joint News Supplement



A thriving discussion session took place in Dawawine Cafe, Gemmayze on the 5th of November 2015.

Lebanese and Syrian writers, journalists, media professionals, researchers, and social workers who participated in the 9th issue of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” joint news supplement gathered to speak more about their contributions.

This supplement is produced by the “Peace Building in Lebanon” project, funded by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW. The original Arabic version was distributed on the 26th of October 2015 with An-Nahar and As-Safir newspapers while a translated English version was distributed with The Daily Star and a translated French version with L'Orient Le Jour. The supplement was also published on the UNDP Lebanon website on this link: (<http://lb.undp.org/PBsupplement>).

Participants covered the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon and the relations between Lebanese and Syrians, employing objective approaches that are free of hatred and misconceptions. The discussion was fast-paced and interactive. Everyone had something to share, from personal experiences to stories from their daily lives as Syrians in Lebanon or as Lebanese in host communities. They also heard more about each other's contributions in the supplement and the concealed stories behind them.

“It was never unusual for Syrians to be in Lebanon and vice versa as we tried to show as producers of ‘Al-Shahbandar’s Daughter’ drama series. There was never a need for a permission to stay in any desired city. It was enough to have a good background and reputation to be welcomed anywhere” said Hozan Akko, Syrian writer. Akko explained that his participation in the supplement helped him alter any misunderstanding caused by the series and explained that it reflected the truth.

During the discussion session, there was a free flow going on. Participants suggested and recommended many ideas that the “Peace Building” team could build on to produce upcoming supplements.

Among the suggestions, Nawal Mdallaly, a Lebanese activist in human rights, proposed that the supplement tackles the situation of women in asylum and violence against women inside refugee camps.

German student in Lebanon, Gina Birkholz also expressed her solidarity with the Lebanese host communities and said that this debate is international. “We have faced the same issue in Germany back in the 70s with the Italians. It is purely human to feel at risk when it comes to opportunities and basic needs in presence of migrants, but at the end history has shown that people get integrated and get over their differences.”

The participants discussed and shared many common ideas over lunch. This session was an eye-opening opportunity to share other points of view without barriers.

“History has shown that people get integrated and get over their differences”



Highlighting Positive Stories in the 10th Issue of the Joint News Supplement



“Lebanon has shouldered the burden of the Syrian crisis for several years and is showing the world how to remain resilient and relatively stable. It has stumbled, too, but we can all learn from those missteps. During this festive season, I invite you to look around your own community for positive stories of resilience, sharing and compassion” said UNDP Country Director, Mr. Luca Renda in his editorial featured in the 10th issue of the “Peace Building in Lebanon” joint news supplement.

It was distributed with An-Nahar and As-Safir newspapers on Friday 18th of December 2015 while a translated English version was distributed with The Daily Star and a translated French version with L'Orient-Le Jour. It is produced by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project with the generous support of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW.

In this issue of the supplement, as in previous ones, Lebanese and Syrian writers, human rights activists, artists, journalists, media professionals and researchers discussed topics related to displaced Syrians and the communities that host them with a special focus on emigration. Participants in this venture have given particular attention to the emotional, humanitarian, cultural and artistic dimensions of the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon. They have examined mutual stereotyping, discrimination and cooperation employing objective approaches that are free of hatred and misconceptions.

“Perhaps a poet’s experience is different than that of a regular person when it comes to the difficult crisis of Syrian refugees. However, living in a city that is small, vital and tense, and sharing the experiences and dreams of new friends, renders it an experience that is both difficult and alluring at the same time” wrote Ali Jazo a Syrian writer and participant in the supplement. For Sahar Mandour, another writer in the supplement “Comparisons should not be made between the Lebanese Civil War and the conflict raging in Syria today. On most levels such comparisons aren’t valid because of the differences in the two contexts.”

The supplement can be viewed and downloaded on the below link:

www.lb.undp.org/pbsupplement

Discussing the supplement and reading between the lines

Given the media’s powerful influence on the public, the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project always organizes informal discussion sessions following the publication of the project’s joint new supplement as an essential part of its activities, having a strong belief in the ability to make a change through media.

Participants in the supplement and invitees gathered on Tuesday December 22nd 2015 in Dawawine Café in Gemmayzeh to discuss the topics and stories of the 10th supplement over friendly coffee and open atmosphere. The supplement was a bit more focused this time. It tackled various topics yet illegal emigration dominated the articles and the discussion. Due to the current season of migration, discussing it was inevitable.

Darine El Helweh, reporter at Skynews Arabia, who wrote the article entitled “Season of Migration... to Death” in this issue of the supplement, received massive feedback. The discussion session was a chance for Darine to give more details and dive deeper into the stories told in her published



material. It was also a great opportunity for participants to read between the lines, and see through the faces of the mentioned desperate Lebanese families and young men from North Lebanon who suffer from bad living conditions and who are joining Syrian refugees on the “boats to death” from Tripoli port, fleeing their miserable conditions, in addition to Syrian immigrants from the Lebanese coast to Europe.

Commenting on Darine El Helweh’s article, Tareq Awwad, a participant in the supplement and founder of “Syria Eyes a team”, said that, this article is an eye-opening material especially that so many articles are currently talking about the competition between Syrians and Lebanese over basic needs.

Then participants created a flow of intense conversation around exploitation of those in need, forced displacement, environmental challenges, politics and art.

Speaking of the impact of the Syrian crisis on the Syrian drama and its repercussion on the Lebanese art-scene and theater, Abido Bacha, theater critic and researcher, explained that he was really intrigued to write about this issue in the supplement. To him, the articles only show one part of the story. He explains that “Syrian plays and drama works have changed so much after the Syrian war. This discussion session helped me reveal more personal experiences and insights related to my article.”

Even though some questions remain unanswered to what could be done to alter the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, participants in the supplement and discussion session helped circulate a new wave of conversation and tackled topics that may be considered as taboos in other media outlets. This is why the free-of-hatred-speech supplement and its respective discussion session prove that behind the headlines, the truth is always as intriguing.

“Violent images in Media” a study calling to build violence-free society

How is the media dealing with violence images? Till which extend is the media participating in establishing a culture of violence? What are the steps taken to encounter it? What is the role of the media in peace building and preventing violence?

These are some questions raised in a study entitled “Violent images in media”. Funded by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW, this is the forth study elaborated by Maharat Foundation in cooperation with the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project in the context of monitoring the implementation of the “Journalists’ Pact for strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon.”

Gathered in Radisson Blu Martinez Hotel - Ein Mreisseh on the 24th of November 2015, a number of Editors in Chief and Media representatives discussed the findings and recommendations of this study.

Based on their experiences, participants commented on situations or events where violent images were displaced, and expressed their fear of “media degradation” in parallel with the rise of ISIS and its “powerful” audio-visual material. “TVs should stop broadcasting violent videos of ISIS” said Khalil Khoury, editor in chief of Aliwaa newspaper.

A comment shared by Nabil Bou Ghanem from Al Mustaqbal newspaper, who adopted a more pessimistic approach regarding the media situation in Lebanon, “we have hit rock bottom” he added.

Maharat Foundation based its study on analysing and monitoring the implementation of the articles in the Journalists’ Pact related to the use of violent images, by the participating media outlets. This pact, which was drawn up based the media outlets’ input, is intended to curb incitement by promoting responsible journalism standards. In the same context, an animated infographic has been produced, which summarizes the results and recommendations of the study.

The UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project aimed since 2007 at enhancing mutual understanding and social cohesion in a participatory approach with youth, educators, media, NGOs, municipal council members and mukhtars and local leaders.

In response to the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon and in order to alleviate the growing tensions in the country, the project works on enhancing the capacities of different society groups from local leaders to educators, media and civil society, on crisis management, peace building and conflict resolution. The project supports these groups in developing both medium and long-term strategies for peace building.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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