

“Peace Building in Lebanon” project’s newsletter

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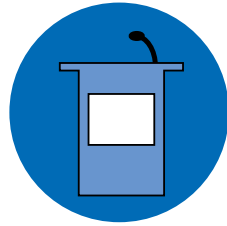


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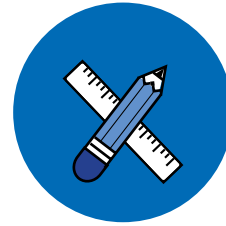
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The “Peace Building in Lebanon” project is working on the implementation of the designed Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) in Akkar, Menieh-Donnieh, Bekaa, South and Nabatieh. All of the activities designed to respond to identified causes of conflicts aim at promoting social cohesion and maintaining social stability.

The joint committee in **Sahl Akkar** has started working on its first project aimed at producing a short video about their region and its unique features.

In **Menieh-Donnieh**, the **Minieh** committee will be running a short English language course to empower the youth. The Donnieh committee is working on drafting a touristic plan for the village to encourage tourism and development locally. In Deir Ammar and Asoun work is being done with the local youth on bringing them together in joint activities to reduce tensions after the municipal elections.

In the **Bekaa** and in **Baalbek**, various activities will be implemented under the “Sports Peace Month” theme that includes various sports games to demonstrate the importance of cooperation between the various segments of Baalbek population.

Hawsh Barada will be organizing a traditional villager’s dinner with a night by the fire.

Talia will be conducting awareness raising (training workshop) on waste sorting, targeting all the stakeholders in Talia.

Kfarzabad will organize a two-day cultural and sports camp. The camp will bring together Lebanese and Syrian youth aiming at relieving the resulted psychological stress and tensions on both communities.

Riyyaq is planning to organize a marathon and to conduct handicrafts activity targeting Lebanese and Syrian women.

Makseh will be conducting music courses to reduce the social distance between Lebanese and Syrian children and youth of both genders.

Qab Elias will be organizing a cultural and entertaining camp for Lebanese and Syrian youth that aims at non-violence, and finally **Ali Al Nahri** is planning to conduct leisure, sports, and cultural activities open to people of all ages to reduce tension within the community.

In South Lebanon, in the villages of **Bablieh** and **Addousieh**, day activities targeting youth were organized and aimed at reducing tensions and bringing together the village population. Kfarjarra and Lebaa will soon implement similar activities.

Kharayeb and **Seddiqin** committees have designed their separate garbage management plans and will start implementing them soon.

As for the **Nabatieh** area, the five villages implemented the established MSS through organizing social activities.

In **Choukine**, the youth committee organized a traditional dinner to enhance social cohesion among various local groups living in the village. Kfarchouba and Ibl El Saqi worked separately on enhancing the social interaction by organizing a hiking day and a traditional dinner.

In **Kfarouman**, the established committee designed an awareness campaign against drugs delivered by a specialist. Also a marathon and puppets production sessions were organized and a puppets’ show was performed to promote for alternatives that may prevent youth from slipping toward addiction.

In **Marjeyoun**, the committee will soon start implementing the suggested activity which consists of conducting awareness raising (training workshop) on waste sorting, targeting all the stakeholders.



Municipal Elections Spark Up Community Work in North Lebanon

The municipal elections that took place in May 2016 caused a lot of tension and competitiveness at the local level. Local authorities have changed – and the tables have turned. Thus, the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) being established by local authorities and local actors with the support of UNDP in several localities all over Lebanon are timely and provide a framework as to how municipal governments can identify and address key sources of tensions in their communities. Yet, the work with the local stakeholders had to go on and emphasize on the important roles and messages carried by the local committees.

In order to preserve social stability and enhance relations within communities, particularly in light of the Syrian crisis, and through its “Peace Building in Lebanon” project, UNDP is supporting the host communities to develop Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) in order to provide a safe and common space for the local groups to discuss their fears in public and to suggest mechanisms to resolve those concerns.

In this frame, the project has been working, since the beginning of 2016, with 7 villages from Akkar and Minieh-Donnieh, North Lebanon, on initiating the formation of local mechanisms according to the results of the conflict analysis.

Hassan Muslmani from Tal Maayan was one of many participants showing enthusiasm towards the work of the committees. “I am now encouraged to continue working for my community as part of the civil society. We thought we had to be on the municipal board to do so, yet this committee has given us the chance to be included regardless”, he said.

As a result of the development of the MSS, each committee took the lead to address local challenges as it sees fit. Aasoun’s committee for example, chose to form “youth groups” in their village in order to reduce pulls between Lebanese-Lebanese and Lebanese-Syrian communities – gathering them on a regular basis and kicking off small activities and events.

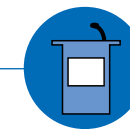
Arts and Peace: Saadnayel Spreads a Cultural Vibe Throughout the Bekaa



Hundreds of small paintings decorated Saadnayel’s public high school walls as a reflection of the positive interaction between the Lebanese and Syrian children in the village. Simple drawings of facial reactions and scenes of nature imagined by the children of the village drew smiles upon

their parents’ faces. Groups of proud families gathered around the art teacher and young artists, showing support to an initiative that is about to change the cultural scene in Saadnayel, Bekaa.

In order to boost positive synergy among Lebanese and Syrian families and to encourage communication and ease tension caused by daily problems and stress, the socio-cultural committee of Saadnayel, supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project as part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) implemented all over Lebanon, organized a 14-day drawing workshop during June - July 2016 for 60 children aged between 5 and 12 years old.



Children were able to display their artworks during a ceremony organized on the 27th of July 2016, in the presence of their parents, friends and neighbors.

This activity was funded by UKDFID and was the starting

point of a planned future project by the committee, which is the first children’s entertainment center in Saadnayel aimed to strengthen social stability and reduce tensions in the village.

Creativity, Arts and Innovation, Tools for Peace Building in Majdel Anjar

Paintings, handicrafts, canvas, knitted wool dresses and painted glass were displayed for the 550 visitors coming to attend the arts exhibition in Majdel Anjar, Bekaa organized on Friday 16th of September 2016.

For three months, 60 Lebanese and Syrian women, youth and children were given the opportunity to improve their hidden talents, learn new techniques to develop their art crafts and exchange knowledge and information with experts in the arts and design fields.

This activity is organized by the socio-cultural committee of Majdel Anjar, as part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) process, supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” and funded by UKDFID.

The committee of Majdel Anjar is one of several committees established together by local authorities and local actors all over Lebanon, under the supervision of the municipalities, supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project to address the existing challenges to social stability and peace building as well as those caused by the impact of the Syrian crisis on host communities.

Speaking on behalf of the committee, at the beginning of the launching ceremony, one of the committee members shed light on the importance of education and arts in conflict resolution and prevention. “Instead of holding arms and munitions, participants in this training held brushes and pens to innovate and not to kill”.

“I have been drawing for a long time but never had moments alone to draw what I wanted. This training helped me commit



to drawing things I love. I was surprised of myself and got encouraged by the comments shared by the teachers”, said Lebanese participant Sara Hamzeh, 25 years old, while standing next to her colorful paintings.

For Mohammad Hammoud, Head of Majdel Anjar committee, both the training and exhibition had initiated interaction between Lebanese and Syrian participants away from all kinds of conflict without marginalizing any person. “We wanted to show the world that Majdel Anjar is capable and receptive of life, joy, compassion and creativity”, he added.



Setting a New Kind of “Positive” Addiction in Kfaroman, South Lebanon: Puppets Battle Against Drugs

Few minutes before their first puppetry show, young participants from Kfaroman in South Lebanon, with their “handmade” puppets, and instruments in hand, anxiously practice their role.

Holding the lead puppet character, Rana Jouni, one of the puppeteers, murmurs the message of the play: “Never stop being the strength of this society and the beat of life. I couldn’t stop being a drug addict without the support of my friends and family. I just needed their presence and the will to survive”.

Gathered in the hall of Al Taharor Club in Kfaroman, on Thursday 1st of September 2016, scouts, youth, children and families eagerly came to watch “Qosasna – Our stories” puppetry show. It was part of a drug prevention campaign that aimed at transmitting anti-drug messages. The campaign was organized by the committee in Kfaroman in coordination with the municipality, supported by the Youth Network for Citizenship and Activism (YNCA) and the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project as part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) implemented all over Lebanon, with the generous funds of Norway.

The committee of Kfaroman is one of several committees established together by local authorities and local actors all over Lebanon, under the supervision of the municipalities, supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project to address the existing challenges to social stability and peace building as well as those caused by the impact of the Syrian crisis on host communities.

During the conflict analysis phase of this MSS process, youth issues and problems, including drug addiction and lack of awareness around this topic, were identified by the committee members in Kfaroman as being one of the main sources of tension in the village.



“We wanted a new idea to draw attention to the issue of drug addiction and to move the youth away from all kinds of addictions, even dependency on social media platforms”, said Jouni, who is also a member of the Kfaroman committee and a media officer, explaining the idea behind the “anti-drugs” campaign titled “we start from here”.

Along with the puppetry show and the awareness sessions, the committee of Kfaroman organized a themed marathon on Sunday 21st of August 2016, gathering youth and adults, local actors and different NGO representatives in the village to promote anti-drug messages.

“We wanted a new idea to draw attention to the issue of drug addiction and to move the youth away from all kinds of addictions, even dependency on social media platforms”



Lebanese and Syrian Youth Play Beats of Peace



“I love music. Learning to play drums was a new experience to me. I am proud that it boosted my self-esteem”, proudly said Lebanese participant Nisrine Abou Hamad from Al Qaraoun, Bekaa.

Nisrine was one of 22 Lebanese and Syrian participants who attended 25 hours of intensive music courses to be part of a music band. They all performed their first musical show in the village on Friday the 16th of September, 2016 in the presence of local actors from the village, family and friends. This band is organized by the committee of Al Qaraoun with the support of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project as part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability process (MSS), and the generous fund of KfW.

The committee of Al Qaraoun is one of several committees established together by local authorities and local actors all over Lebanon, under the supervision of the municipalities and supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project to address the existing challenges to social stability and peace building as well as those caused by the impact of the Syrian crisis on host communities.

Music served as a tool to enhance interaction between Lebanese and Syrian participants in Al Qaraoun and to

“I love music. Learning to play drums was a new experience to me. I am proud that it boosted my self-esteem”

reduce conflicts and social differences between the two groups. Ounoud El Sayyed, Syrian participant in the band, used to eagerly wait for the rehearsals to meet her new Lebanese friends and start playing music together. “They used to come before the classes, sit together and share stories”, said music instructor Khaled Khatib, adding that music really brings people together.

“We have always needed to have this kind of bands in Al Qaraoun but never had the means to get instruments nor equipment”, said Talal Gebara, Head of Al Qaraoun Club and committee, while trying to talk to parents of children who were impressed by the performance and wanted to enroll their kids in the band. Gebara believes that this band has added a new and fresh spirit to the village, “It changed the lives of all participants”.





Ecotourism: Gears of Peace Building in South Lebanon

Under the title “Village Day” and aiming at enhancing ecotourism in Kfarchouba, South Lebanon, the Youth Committee established as part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) implemented all over Lebanon, organized a hiking activity where Lebanese and Syrians from the village and its surroundings had the opportunity to enjoy and discover its beautiful natural scenes – promoting coexistence among the residents. The hike that took place on Friday 21st of August 2016, is supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project with the technical support of Youth Network for Activism and Citizenship NGO (YNCA) and funded by UKDFID and Norway.

The Ibl El Saqi youth committee planned an eco-tourism day in their village aiming at enhancing social cohesion among various local groups living in the village and at promoting Ibl El Saqi as a touristic destination. This activity was a result of the UNDP-led MSS trainings, coaching and support to the diverse community members of Ibl El Saqi since October 2015, with the technical support of YNCA and the generous funds of Norway.

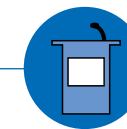
On the early morning of Sunday 21st of August 2016, 200 hikers enjoyed the beautiful landscapes of Ibl El Saqi on a 3 kilometer path. The hike ended at a small lake where the participants shared coffee and small talks.

“The walk today was a beautiful chance for us who now live outside of Ibl El Saqi, and to our children, to experience the village life that we once had here. It is always good to meet old and new friends. Events like this will remain in our collective memory”, said Laudy Bou Jabr, participant from Ibl El Saqi.

Later during that day, the youth committee launched their version of a traditional southern dinner. It gathered once again the residents of the village over folkloric “dabke” dance, music, live cooking of local dishes, craft galleries and entertainment activities for children. Add to that was a large display of local agricultural products, as an attempt to initiate the socio-economic wheel in the village.



This activity helped the youth group gain the confidence and skills necessary to lead in their role in developing their local communities and to secure the sustainability of similar initiatives at the local level.



Cultural and heritage days in South Lebanon

In line with the ongoing Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) process in **Babliyah**, South Lebanon, the Tadamon Association in cooperation with Babliyah municipality organized a two day village festival on August 13 and 14, 2016. The two day events included traditional village tools and historic photos exhibition, sport competitions, songs and dances presented by the youth of the village and local verses recited by older men. The festival aimed at strengthening social cohesion in the village by bringing families and youth together in an entertaining setting.



A group of poets, singers and rising talents from **Addousiyeh**, South Lebanon also performed on stage on the 19th and 20th of August 2016. As part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability, a traditional village celebration was held with a singer and local youth folkloric dance group. The festival aimed at strengthening social cohesion in the village by bringing families and youth together in an entertaining setting and in creating opportunities for the new generation locals living outside of Addousiyeh to establish ties with their village.

In **Choukine**, South Lebanon, a heritage village event took place on the 27th of August 2016, gathering local actors from the village. Participants and attendees were able to watch a Sufi dance performance, in addition to the traditional Lebanese dance, the dabke, and a theatrical play performed by the village's youth.



Youth and children were able to enjoy an entertainment day in **Lebaa** on the 3rd of September 2016. Games, activities and children shows helped setting a friendly atmosphere.

Part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS), the festival aimed at strengthening social cohesion in the village by bringing families and youth together in an entertaining setting.

These activities were supported by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project, with the technical support of Youth Network for Citizenship and Activism NGO (YNCA), funded by UKDFID and Norway.



The Lebanon Support Research center published with the support of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” the third conflict analysis bulletin in June 2016 - from the 1st of January to 30 April 2016 with the generous funds of UKDFID.

A total of 1,407 conflict incidents were mapped by Lebanon Support Research Center on its interactive geo-located map. These took place in 281 villages, and were categorized as 24 different types of incidents or categories, and involved 40 different actors.

As seen in the overview of mapped conflicts in 2015 infographic, the number of conflicts mapped between January and April 2015 is 923, and so the first third of this year saw a 34% increase in incidents.

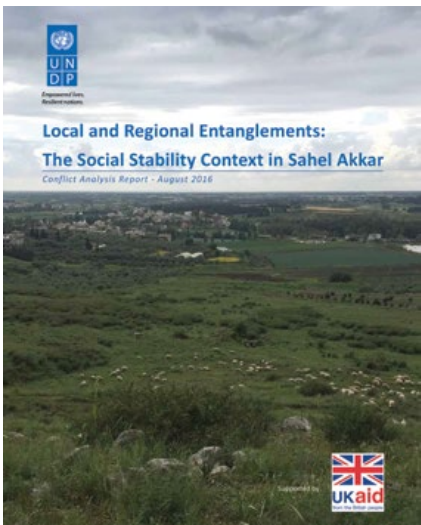
With the last third of 2015 having 1,386 conflict incidents

mapped, Lebanon Support’s mapping reveals that incidents are consistently on the rise. This is due to more systematic reporting on conflicts, as well as Lebanon’s support reliance on a diversity of sources for info and data.

In addition to the publication of the conflict analysis bulletin, the Lebanon Support Research Center has organized with the support of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” a technical workshop in July 2016 to convert the mapped incidents into an index showing the propensity of each location to experience conflict incidents’, with the aim of strengthening the use of the conflict map by social stability partners in their programming.

<http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/article/conflict-analysis-bulletin-issue-3-june-2016>

“Local and Regional Entanglements: The Social Stability Context in Sahel Akkar”



The conflict mapping and analysis component of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project aims at consolidating and spreading systematic and quality information on conflict issues in Lebanon so that international and national actors are better informed on conflict issues, trends and dynamics in their programming, building on the expertise developed by UNDP through its peace building project and on the leadership role of UNDP in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan.

The report “Local and Regional Entanglements: The Social Stability Context in Sahel Akkar” introduces the conflict context in the Sahel Akkar area, the Lebanese most northern coastal area bordering Syria. Sahel Akkar is predominantly agricultural, with Muslim Sunni and Alawite residents and a small Christian minority, in addition to a Syrian refugee population equivalent in number to a third of the Lebanese population. The report is based on the field research from Muzna AL-Masri.

This report and all previous ones can be found on the link below:
http://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/crisis_prevention



Overview on the Violence Free Schools initiative

The implementation of the Violence Free Schools initiative in Mount Lebanon started in 2015 in 15 intermediate public schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The working groups composed of teachers, students and parents have finalized the Codes of Conduct related to non-violence in the school. The Codes of Conduct are documents that set the peaceful values of the school and the rights and duties of each member of the school community. The schools have also decided on community activities that they would like to undertake in their schools in order to encourage a culture of non-violence. Five of the schools have executed the activities at the end of the previous academic year while the others have

preferred to undergo them at the beginning of the academic year 2016-2017. In parallel, participating teachers have received a practical training on their role in peacebuilding and on integrating peacebuilding tools in their schools. The last phase of the Violence Free Schools initiative related to the dissemination of a culture of non-violence in the 15 schools involved in the project in the Bekaa area will also be implemented through activities that will start with the beginning of the new academic year to complete the work that was launched in 2014. The Violence Free Schools initiative will also be implemented in 15 new schools in Tripoli city and its surrounding areas during the academic year 2016-2017.



The UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project has been providing capacity building support to the NGO Fighters for Peace. The Fighters for Peace organization (FFP) was established in 2014 by ex-fighters from the Lebanese civil war who wanted to transfer a message of non-violence to future generations. Members of FFP use their life stories

to advocate for peace. Over the past few months, FFP members have received support in consolidating their public speaking skills and presentation skills as actors who participate in peace building through storytelling and lectures.

Under the Theme of “Violence is not a Tool of Change” Fighters For Peace Holds its Third Summer Camp

Text written by FFP member Fouad Dirani

Although it has been almost four decades since the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War, most of those who had taken part in the said war still remain silent about their roles and responsibilities and the disastrous results that

have led to the War. Others, however, give justifications and excuses for joining the war and blame the political circumstances and atmosphere that preceded the civil war and accompanied it all along its phases. The association



Fighters For Peace is working, conversely, on shedding light on the human, social, economic and psychological casualties incurred by the war, and is therefore making efforts to encourage those who participated in the war to acknowledge the absurdity of soliciting violence to impact the status quo or change it. Within this framework, the association held its third summer camp, over a three-day period, in the Basilian Order Convent in Bmekkine in the Caza of Aley, under the theme of "Violence is not a Tool of Change". The camp was attended by twenty two men

and women who had participated in the war and twenty six boys and girls from secondary and college education. Rona Zein, a secondary education student, expresses her joy to seeing fighters "who had already faced each other in trenches and military sites telling us about the negative aspects of war. Other trainers introduced us to new topics that were totally new to us. We also found out, through interactive and simplified means, that what holds people together is greater than what sets them apart".

Cinema Versus Hate



"There has never been a better particular time to talk about the "Other". Lebanon can be a good example to the world on this", said Luca Renda, UNDP Country Director, during the opening of the 1st edition of Karama Beirut Human Rights Festival entitled "The Others", in Metropolis Theatre, Achrafieh Beirut. This festival was partially supported by the UNDP

"Peace Building in Lebanon" through the generous funds of BPRM-USA, among other donors.

The Karama Beirut Human Rights Film Festival is a film event organized by Ma3mal 961 NGO, the Beirut-based NGO that contributes among other well-established and renowned human rights festival in the world, to spreading a cinema that denounces racism, hatred discourse, discrimination and injustice. The Ma3mal 961 is part of ANHAR, a regional network of film festivals and affiliated organizations working on tackling human rights issues.

Part of this festival was a one day seminar entitled "The Others: Racism and Refugees in Lebanon", which took place on the 22nd of July 2016. Dr. Hassan Abbas, Founder and President of the Syrian League of Citizenship in Syria, Nizar Saghieh, Lebanese lawyer and activist specialized in Human Rights and Rasha Jarhum, Senior Development Policy Advisor and social researcher from Yemen headed the discussion panel. The renowned regional speakers tackled the general viewpoint of the "Other" and the refugees through denouncing all forms of violence and violation of their human rights.

Prior to this seminar, the award winning European film "We Could Have, We Should Have, We Didn't" tackling the subject of the refugees in exile was screened, leaving the audience in awe.



Identity, perception and economic repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon at the heart of the UNDP news supplement



Funded by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW, this issue was published on the 30th of September 2016.

The Arabic version was distributed with Annahar and As-Safir newspapers while the English version was distributed with The Daily Star and the French one with L'Orient-Le Jour.

Lebanese and Syrian writers, human rights activists, artists, journalists, media professionals and researchers discussed civil peace issues in addition to topics related to displaced Syrians and the communities that host them. Participants in this venture have given particular attention to the emotional, humanitarian, and economic dimensions of the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon.

This 13th issue of the supplement gave participants the opportunity to share their perceptions, fears and aspirations.

"Over the past four years, I have said goodbye to a large number of friends who passed through Beirut on their way to Turkey where death boats awaited them! Who can blame them? Death and poverty have beset most of them, their homes have been destroyed, so they have preferred adventure at sea to staying in undignified displacement camps", wrote Syrian novelist Lina Hwayan el Hassan.

The supplement was uploaded on the UNDP Lebanon website (www.lb.undp.org/pbsupplement) and shared on all UNDP related social media platforms.

"I Hate You. A powerful statement and title of a 385-page study on hate speech and sectarianism in "Arab Spring" media. It is also a reflection of countless Arab world afflictions that was published in 2014 by the Amman-based Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ)."

That's how also Magda Abu-Fadil, journalist, blogger and director of Media Unlimited started her article entitled "I hate you", tackling this study, which was published in the 13th issue of the UNDP Peace Building in Lebanon news supplement.



The media in and on Tripoli: Positivity is needed!



In Tripoli, North Lebanon, a fight in any neighborhood, a violent clash between two rival parties, a tossing of a hand grenade, a shooting, or even stories of harassment and verbal abuse – each is sufficient to attract the media, as talks of weapons and terror are quickly spread.

“The media deals with Tripoli from the standpoint of security incidents”, said Omar El-Sayyed, LBCI reporter in Tripoli, calling for extensive coverage of positive initiatives in Tripoli. Omar was one of 14 local reporters and journalists who eagerly participated in a meeting organized by Maharat

Foundation in partnership with the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project funded by KfW on July 21st, 2016 in Ahwetna/March Café in Bab al-Tabbaneh.

In the former frontline of fighting between residents of the Jabal Mohsen and the Tabbaneh neighborhoods, they all discussed the different clauses of the “Journalists’ Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon” launched in 2013 and signed by 34 national media outlets. They also debated over the results of media monitoring studies produced by Maharat Foundation in cooperation with UNDP since 2015. For some of the participants, the Pact was an eye-opening tool, and a much needed one especially if applied correctly in Tripoli. Access to information, positive initiatives, religious discourse, and violent images in the media, racism and respect of the “Other” are all topics and expressions mentioned in the Pact and raised as problems or solutions during the meeting.

The meeting was an opportunity for journalists to express what they had in mind and share experiences, stories and ideas about how to make “Tripoli look better in the eyes of the media”.

The Media in Municipal Elections: Manipulator or Scapegoat?

The latest municipal elections in Lebanon left much room for debate. Seizing this opportunity, Maharat Foundation, in coordination with the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project funded by KfW, sought to initiate a discussion on the role of the media in covering municipal elections within the context of the “Journalist’s Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace” – the crux of the UNDP-Maharat partnership. Journalists, experts, political analysts, and candidates for

the latest municipal elections of Lebanon, as well as representatives from UNDP and Maharat, met on the 19th of July 2016 for a discussion facilitated by MTV news editor-in-chief, Mr. Walid Abboud.

Executive Director of Maharat Foundation, Mrs. Roula Mikhael, emphasized the importance of this discussion especially in light of the political situation in Lebanon that

often limits the media space for voter education, democratic awareness, and local development. Mr. Luca Renda, UNDP Country Director, reminded the audience that this discussion falls under the framework of the “Journalist’s Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace”. This Pact was launched by UNDP in 2013, in partnership with the Ministry of Information. The “Peace Building in Lebanon” project, in collaboration with Maharat Foundation, has been monitoring its implementation by the 34 national media outlets that signed it since 2015 and has published till date 5 media monitoring studies.

During the months leading up to the elections (February-April), coverage in the media focused on whether the elections will take place. Thus, media space allocated for candidates and for voters’ education remained very limited. During election month, however, the majority of media coverage (72%) consisted of local news on candidates, alliances, and competitors.

During the discussion, divergent personal and professional views appeared. Perhaps the media’s violations occupied most of the discussion.

Ibrahim Mneimneh spoke of Beirut Madinati list’s fluctuating relationship with the media and the need to resort to social media for an extra “push”. While candidates on behalf of political parties complained of being vilified in the media and portrayed as “against civil society” as Mr. Abed Salam Moussa argued.

Journalists, in response, defended their profession, which they felt was being wrongfully depicted. For Denise Rahme Fakhri from MTV, “Journalists are always in search for the scoop and often resort to sensationalizing certain local events to avoid being boring”. Mr. Charbel Abboud from Future TV contended, “The Lebanese cannot expect BBC or CNN coverage in the Lebanese media. We are Lebanese media that resembles the Lebanese society.” As for Manar



Sabbagh from Al Manar, she believed that civil society was equally represented in the media and believed that the role of social media was being exaggerated. Media representatives had one united message: “don’t misjudge the media”.

“Journalists are always in search for the scoop and often resort to sensationalizing certain local events to avoid being boring”

The UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project works since 2007 on enhancing mutual understanding and promoting social cohesion by addressing root causes of conflict in Lebanon. The project has been also lately working on addressing the impact of the Syrian crisis on social stability in Lebanon.

The project supports different groups from local leaders and local actors, to educators, journalists, youth and civil society activists, in developing medium and long-term strategies for peace building, crisis management and conflict prevention.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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