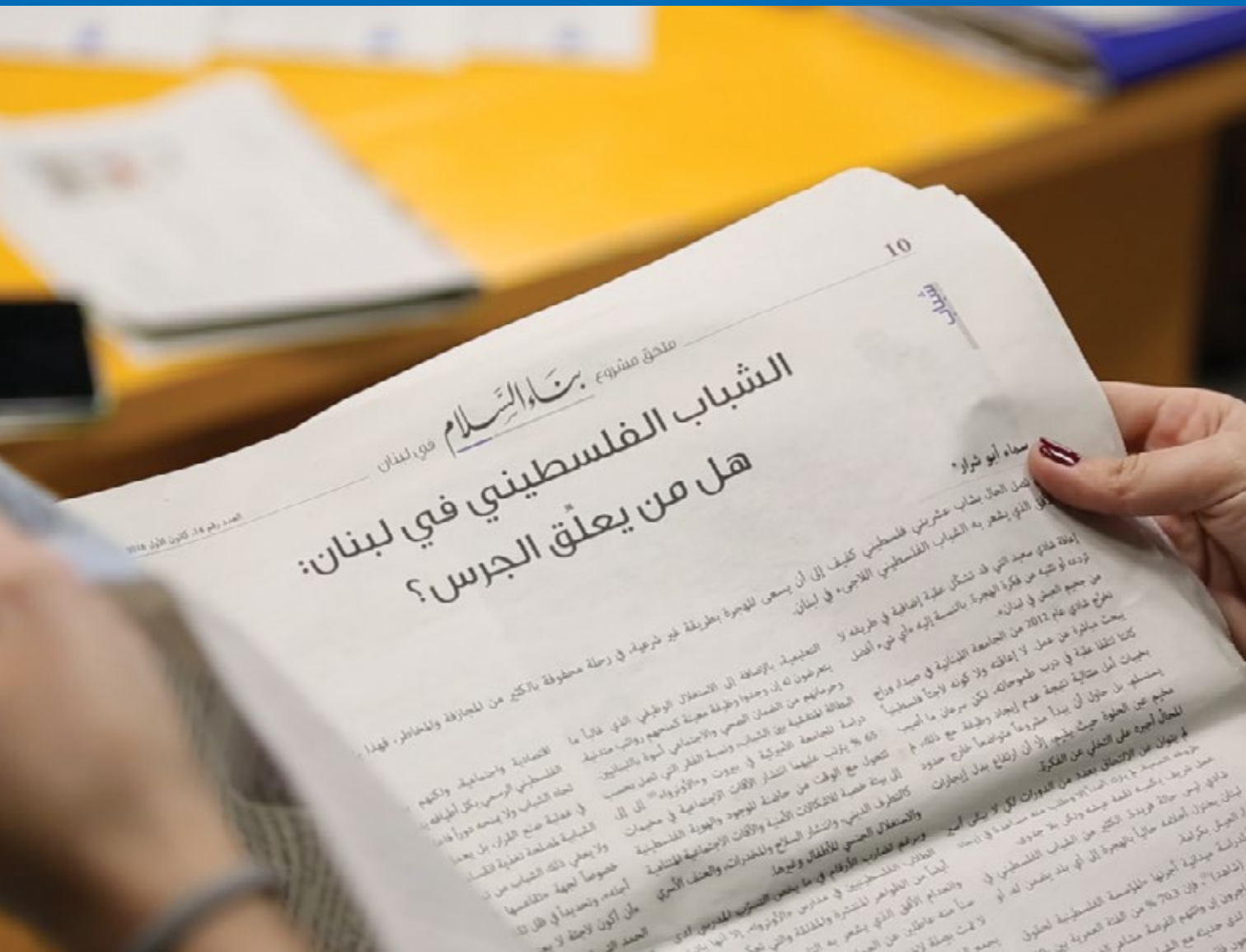


“Peace Building in Lebanon” project’s newsletter

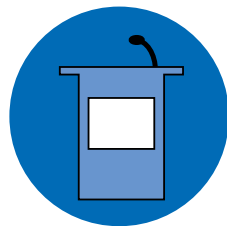
ISSUE N°15 - QUARTER 1 - 2017



WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



Newsletter Content



PEACE BUILDING
THROUGH LOCAL
COMMUNITIES



CONFLICT MAPPING
AND ANALYSIS



PEACE BUILDING
THROUGH EDUCATION



PEACE BUILDING
THROUGH MEDIA

- 03

Implementation of Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS)
- 04

Empowering Social Stability at the Roots
- 05

Committees in North Lebanon and Bekaa Renewing Their Commitment to Social Stability
- 06

Developing the Potential of Minieh's Youth
- 07

Wadi Khaled and Akroum Unions of Municipalities Equipped with the Needed Strategies and Regulations
- 08

Mapping and Analyzing Conflict
- 09

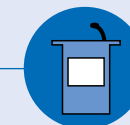
Students and Teachers Stressing on the Importance of the Education Sessions
- 11

Akkar's Journalists Talk Of Challenges Amidst Social Media Craze
- 12

"I am only afraid of the other because we never meet"
- 13

"Peace Building in Lebanon" News Supplement Visits Saida
- 14

Conference on Media Regulations: "Less Complaining, More Solutions"



Implementation of Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS)

The "Peace Building in Lebanon" project implemented the designed Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) in Akkar, Menieh-Donnieh, Bekaa, South and Nabatieh. The Sahel Akkar committee screened its documentary movie about the area in new villages. The Minieh-Donnieh committee carried out the closing event of its English and Computer Courses on January 19, 2017. The guests at the event included the mayor and local actors, and it was an opportunity for the committee to announce its establishment.

The **Deir Ammar** committee held the inauguration of its Peace Garden on January 16, 2017. A public event to announce the establishment of the committee to the local community was organized in the presence of the Qaimaqam and the mayor and to highlight the important role of the committee.

The **Asoun** youth group organized on February 17, 2017, a public event to mark the end of the cleaning and tree plantation campaign organized the week before.

Training sessions for the Unions of **Wadi Khaled** and **Akroum** Municipalities were launched in March 2017. Six training days focused on the structure of the unions, and their role in development and project design.

Over 40 members of **North and Akkar** Mechanisms for Social Stability members took part in a closing training event on February 25 and 26 in **Chekka**. The training was an opportunity to review some of the skills and concepts they had learned during the previous year's trainings and to adjust their plans for the future.

In the **Bekaa**, the established committees organized several activities to introduce themselves to their communities. The implemented activities aimed at enabling the committees to play a major role in preventing or reducing tensions and

different types of conflicts between the different elements of the local communities. The Mediation and Development Committee of **Hawsh Barada** organized on February 12, 2017 a traditional villager's breakfast aiming at enhancing the social interaction among various local groups living in its village.

The Cultural Committee of **Makseh** village, in Central Bekaa, organized a graduation ceremony for 20 young Lebanese and Syrian students who had attended intensive music courses for four months. The music sessions aimed at reducing the social distance between Lebanese and Syrian children and youth of both genders, and nurturing the young generation's musical, artistic talents and creativity, which in turn would foster a culture of peace and non-violence within their local community.

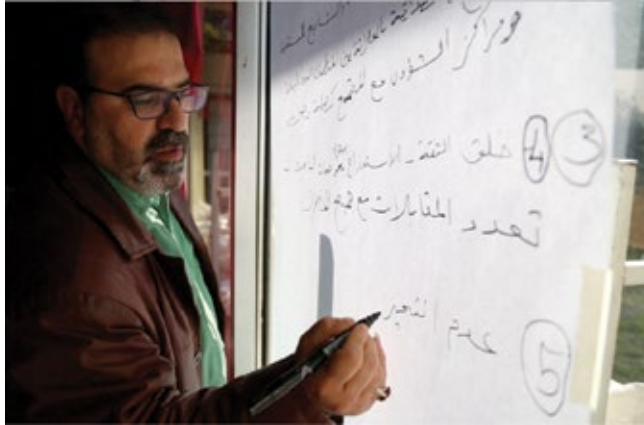
Talia's committee is currently conducting music courses to enhance the positive social interaction between the Lebanese and Syrian children.

On March 4 and 5, 2017 a two-day follow-up retreat took place for the Social Stability Committee from **Makseh, Qab Elias, Ali Al Nahri, Riyaq, Baalbek, Talia, Hawsh Barada and Kfar Zabad**. 38 persons representing the 8 committees actively participated in the retreat. The retreat aimed at enhancing the team-building capacities of the committees' members and at helping them draft their mission and vision, and work on empowering their internal structures by distributing roles and responsibilities among each committee

The training of staff of Social Development Centers (SDCs), affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), continued in the last three months in **North, South, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon and Beirut**. Their capacities in conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation were strengthened and they gained the requisite skills to take part in the new phase of the MSS.



Empowering Social Stability at the Roots



Over the course of 5 months, the UNDP Lebanese Host Communities Support (LHSP) project has implemented through the “Peace Building in Lebanon” project in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), a training program to build the capacities of the Social Development Centers’ managers and area coordinators in implementing the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS). The UNDP has designed the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) with the financial support of UKDFID, to help local and municipal leaders in communities hosting displaced Syrians, in conflict management.

To empower and build the capacities of MoSa staff, the UNDP is technically supporting the Ministry staff in playing the leading role in the facilitation, the development and the implementation of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) given the closeness of the SDCs to the Lebanese communities.

116 area coordinators and SDC directors from 55 centers all over Lebanon’s governorates, have benefitted from the coaching and training sessions which focused on Conflict Mapping and Analysis and Mapping of Local Actors. To equip the participants with the adequate tools and skills MoSA staff also received coaching in the techniques of Negotiation and Mediation with the technical support of UNDP Consultant Nabil Hassan.

Throughout the training sessions, participants were always engaged and highly motivated in practicing and developing different techniques and strategies to ensure positive outcomes at the local level.

“It is extremely important being gathered here with fellow SDC directors from the South. Our common training sessions are strengthening our collaboration across the villages and the coordination between us” said Ghassan Abou JahJah, Tyr SDC manager, during a training session at the Municipality of Saida.

During the past months, (November 2016 - March 2017) the capacity building sessions were providing the participants with the needed tools to adopt conflict sensitive approaches within the framework of their day-to-day social work in the Lebanese host communities.

Rouba Sourani, Manager of the SDC in Qobbeh, Tripoli, said during the training of MoSA staff of the North “One day after this training, when we will become fully equipped and skilled in conflict resolution, we aim at resolving or contributing to reducing the historical tensions in our area, like Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen.”

The UNDP will proceed with the training throughout 2017 to cover all remaining subjects - securing the durability of the mechanisms and boosting their impact on social stability among Lebanese and Syrians.

“Our common training sessions are strengthening our collaboration across the villages and the coordination between us”

Committees in North Lebanon and Bekaa Renewing Their Commitment to Social Stability

“Sometimes conflict is asleep but events like the coming parliamentary elections might initiate it. This is when your role as a committee is key!” said Nabil Hassan, UNDP consultant during a training retreat for the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) committees in North Lebanon, end of February 2017.

As part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) funded by UKDFID, the UNDP Lebanese Host Communities Support Project organized through the “Peace Building in Lebanon” project, during February and March 2017 a two day follow up retreat gathering seven villages from North Lebanon and eight villages from the Bekaa to share and learn from their local experiences in defying conflict and to fill in the gaps identified during the implementation of their social activities.

Most of the committees implemented activities in the past year, and the retreat was an opportunity for them to share together the successes, strengths, weaknesses and challenges they faced while organizing their events.

Both retreats had the same objectives: to follow-up on the status of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) that started in mid-2016 and to ensure that the committees are playing an effective role within their communities. In addition to training them on topics related to Funding, Management of Funds, Conflict Identification, Analysis and Resolution with the technical support of Akkar Network for Development in North Lebanon, and Nabad for Development in Bekaa.

37 members from the social stability committees of Baalbak, Talia, Makseh, Qab Elias, Riyaq, Kfarzabad, Hawsh Barada and Ali Nahri (Central and North Bekaa) were gathered on March 4-5, 2017 in Riyaq to design their internal strategy, vision, mission and their future workplan to reach the desired goals.

On the northern side of Lebanon, around 30 participants, members of Syr, Asoun, Deir Ammar, El Minieh and Sahl



Akkar committees attended on February 24-26, 2017 the training retreat, in Chekka, North Lebanon for three days.

Amira Jalkh, Syrian member of Syr Donnieh committee said during the retreat “Wherever I live, I call home. I am motivated to work for the good of Syr, as if I lived my entire life here.” Amira, who was highly motivated and involved in the training, sharing with the attendees the plans of the committee of Syr so openly, said that being part of the MSS process has empowered her as a woman in her society.

They learned from each other the small details that make up successful social activities and the big steps needed to fund and manage their projects. 60 members from committees for social stability in Bekaa and North Lebanon left the retreats with new channels of collaborations among each other, linkages and shared experiences in dealing with conflicts, and new ideas for future projects to implement in their villages.

“Today we are putting our goal as a committee in perspective and repositioning our work to meet this goal”, said Ali Chahla from Kfarzabad’s committee during the retreat.

This workshop served to build on past experiences towards sustaining the committees’ mission in the future. It was also an opportunity to highlight on the leading role of the committees in peace building, reducing tensions and reaching safe and common spaces among Lebanese and Syrians.



Developing the Potential of Minieh's Youth



offers English language and computer training courses to the locals.

The center also serves as a new meeting point for Minieh's Lebanese and Syrian youth, where they gather to share their experiences, learn together and from each other, and propose new ideas and projects to develop the city.

The committee believes that by providing youth with competitive skills and offering them a communal cultural and learning space, Lebanese and Syrians, together, will advance the social stability and development of Minieh.

For almost a year and a half, the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project has been supporting local actors across Lebanon as part of the Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS), and in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA).

The MSS aim at supporting and strengthening local mechanisms for resolving disputes by dealing with conflicts caused by internal Lebanese issues and Lebanese-Syrian ones.

The aim is also to enhance local capacities for dialogue and create spaces of encounter, thus reducing tensions among the Lebanese, and between Lebanese and Syrians. In Minieh in particular, after conducting a conflict and tension analysis, local actors sensed a need for new projects in their city. So, they decided to form a proposal-writing committee to create better job opportunities for Minieh's youth. In addition, the committee aims at reducing strains and improving the situation of Lebanese and Syrian residents.

For this reason, the proposal-writing committee opened the “Sada Computer and Language Learning Center” in mid-November 2016, with the support of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project and the generous funds of UKDFID. The center is situated in the heart of Minieh, and

“We are planning on filling the educational and technical gaps of the Lebanese and Syrians residing in Minieh in order to help improve their economic situation and reduce tensions,” said Mohamad Akl, committee coordinator.

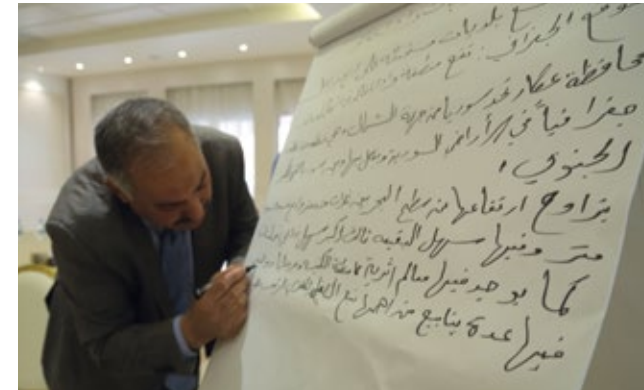
A few months after the opening of the center, the committee celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of 30 students during a public ceremony attended by the Mayor of Minieh, municipal members, members of the municipal union of Minieh, local NGOs, MoSA representatives, and a large number of local young people.

The committee is planning its second round of courses and hopes to develop the center into a go-to hub for Minieh's youth.

“We are planning on filling the educational and technical gaps of the Lebanese and Syrians residing in Minieh in order to help improve their economic situation and reduce tensions”



Wadi Khaled and Akroum Unions of Municipalities Equipped with the Needed Strategies and Regulations



willingness to be equipped with the needed skills and methods to work with local and international NGOs and donors.

“We don't have a solid background in municipal laws and fundraising techniques. We can say that we are now equipped with the needed information and knowledge to manage the municipalities” said Mohammad Ahmad Salem, mayor of Bani Sakher, from Wadi Khaled, North Lebanon. Akram Khalifeh, Mayor of Mounseh in Akroum, North Lebanon, also benefitted from these trainings, who described them as “exceptional” and “important”.

What are the roles and responsibilities of local leaders? What is the role and mandate of municipalities and Unions of municipalities? What are the techniques of proposal writing and fundraising? What is the municipal law?

All of these questions and much more were answered during a series of 6 days trainings given by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project funded by UKDFID, to members of both Akroum and Wadi Khaled Unions of municipalities.

“We don't have a solid background in municipal laws and fundraising techniques. We can say that we are now equipped with the needed information and knowledge to manage the municipalities”

The training took place between March 3rd and March 30th, 2017, and gathered around 20 Heads of Unions of municipalities, mayors, members of unions' boards, members of municipal boards. They all showed eagerness and

This is not the first time that the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project is supporting the Unions of Wadi Khaled and Akroum.

Between 2012 and 2015, UNDP assisted Wadi Khaled municipalities through building their skills in crisis management and conflict resolution which lead to their agreement on establishing the Union of Wadi Khaled Municipalities considered as the main tool for crisis management and social stability, as well as the development of “The Wadi Khaled Development Declaration”. In parallel, UNDP supported Akroum municipalities in developing a mechanism for crisis management and social stability which also lead to the establishment of the Union of Akroum Municipalities.



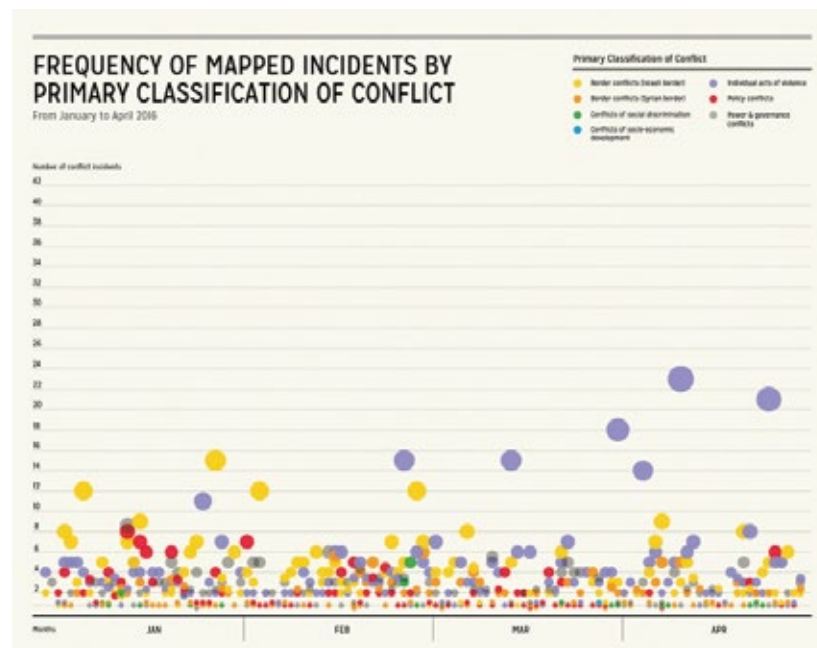
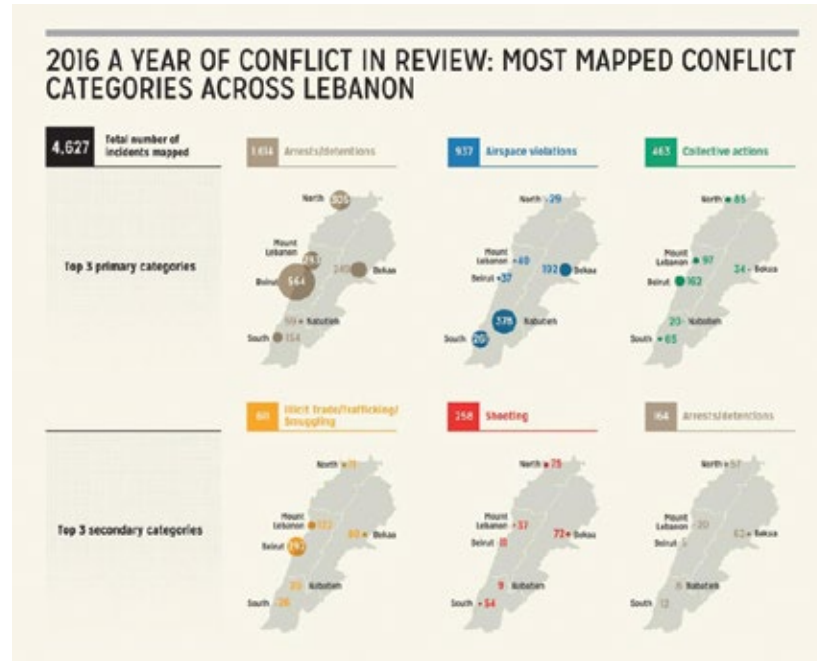


Mapping and Analyzing Conflict

The conflict-mapping and analysis component of the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project reached several milestones in the first three months of 2017, providing new analytical products to national and international partners intervening in Lebanon to support their work. The Lebanon Support latest conflict analysis bulletin analyzes incidents that occurred in 2016. In total, there were 4,605 incidents mapped in 2016, compared with 3,502 in 2015. This increase in incidents can be attributed to both greater consistency in Lebanon Support’s research center mapping of incidents, and greater reporting by law enforcement officials on their activities and the general security situation in the country. In particular, security measures and raids in the aftermath of the bombings in Al Qaa in July 2016 contributed to raising the total number of incidents in summer 2016.

To facilitate the reading and analysis of such a large number of incidents (over 10,000 incidents have been mapped since the launch of the project), Lebanon Support also released the first version of its Conflictivity Index, which was developed after extensive consultation with information managers, conflict analysts, academics and practitioners. The index attributes a weight to each incident to provide an overall score for each district.

Finally, the project is also conducting more in-depth qualitative analysis in areas of particular concern. The next two reports will tackle Central Bekaa, focusing on the Burden of Scarce Opportunity, and Iqlim El Kharroub in the Chouf district.



Copyrights Lebanon Support, Conflict Analysis Project on the civil Society Knowledge Centre: cskc.daleel-madani.org/cma



After its implementation in Bekaa and Mount Lebanon, the Violence Free Schools initiative was launched in 14 schools in Tripoli and neighboring areas in January. The initiative is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and with the technical support of the Center for Active Citizenship and For Development. The sensitization of students through awareness sessions have been completed. Various activities were used to introduce the different types of violence (physical, verbal, structural,

psychological, etc.) to students, to identify violence, and to define their role in breaking the cycle of violence.

The initiative funded by KfW will soon begin work with intermediate-level teachers through discussions on incorporating non-violence approaches in the schools and sheltering school from any external conflicts. The sensitization of teachers will bring together conflict-management, education and psychology experts to reflect on non-violence concepts and introducing them in schools in Tripoli.

Students and Teachers Stressing on the Importance of the Education Sessions

Students from grade 6, 7, 8, and 9, of the selected public Tripoli schools are noticed to have become more intrigued to participate in discussions related to children and education rights and more involved in change-initiating activities.



“The culture of violence is dominant in our community. It is very important to expose these children to different ways of managing and transforming conflict” - Teacher

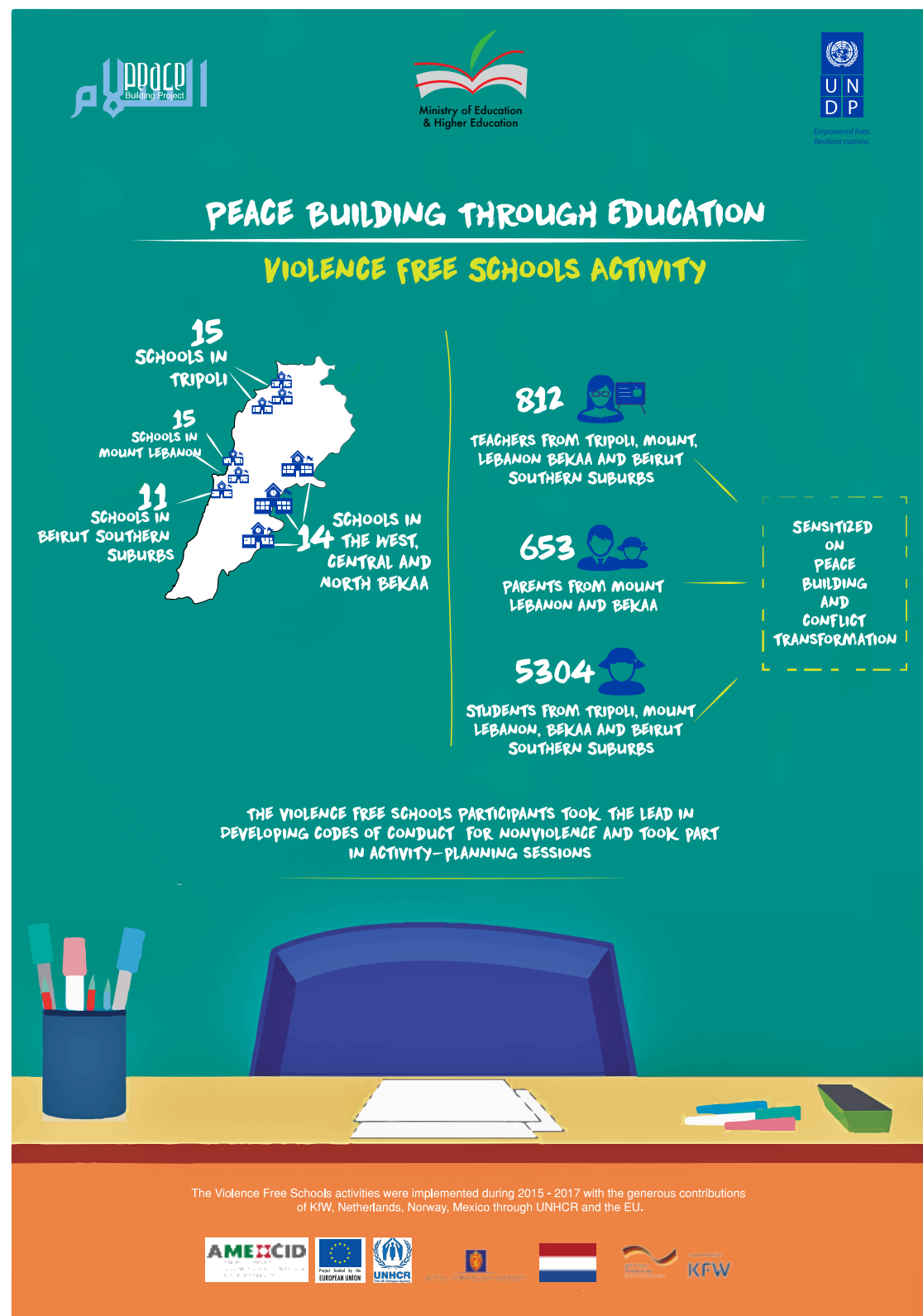
“It’s the first time anyone listen to our problems and ask about our opinions” - Student

“It was very useful for me to sit with my students as they discussed cases of violence. We do not get the chance to discuss life issues together to be able to better understand them and better guide them” - Teacher

“According to the schools’ conditions, students still face many challenges that stand in the way of their development, this is why sessions like these are extremely important” - Teacher

“Through the activities we have realized that we will always find something in common with another person, no matter how different we are” - Student





Akkar's Journalists Talk Of Challenges Amidst Social Media Craze



Journalists gathered to discuss how frustrated they were by the negative impact of social media on traditional media and the profession of journalism in Lebanon in general. The debate focused in particular on the challenges of reporting credible news during conflict and movement limitations. Michel Hallak, a local reporter for the Annahar newspaper, said, "WhatsApp will soon have the ability to broadcast a message to 20,000 people at once. This means that now anyone has the possibility to act as a media outlet. This is something to consider when talking about credible news. How should journalists deal with news being spread this fast?"

25 local reporters and journalists from North Lebanon and Akkar eagerly participated in "Towards a Responsible Media Working on Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon", a meeting organized by Maharat Foundation in partnership with the UNDP "Peace Building in Lebanon" project, on January 19th, 2016, at the Orthodox National School in Halba, Akkar. This activity was funded by UKDFID.

The meeting aimed at introducing the "Journalists' Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon", discussing its clauses, and debating the main challenges facing local reporters.

The pact was signed in 2013 by 34 media institutions and was drawn up based on the media outlets' input. It reaffirms the Lebanese media's leading role in rejecting discrimination and promoting civil peace. In a total of 16 articles, it covers media ethics (e.g. rejection of racial discrimination, respect for people's dignity), the duties of journalists and media institutions (e.g. respecting the rule of law, social responsibility), and media professionalism (e.g. treating information accurately).



This is the third meeting after the two organized in Tripoli in July 2016 and in Saida in December 2016. Several informal meetings will also be taking place in the upcoming months in different areas of Lebanon, introducing the Pact to media personnel and local reporters, and advocating for conflict-sensitive reporting.



“I am only afraid of the Other because we never meet”



“It was a challenge to describe in a one-thousand-word article the situation of Palestinian youth in the camps,” said Samaa Abou Sharar, an independent journalist, president of Majed Abou Sharar Media Foundation, and a contributor to the 14th issue of the “Peace Building in Lebanon” News Supplement.

The discussion session, organized by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project with the funds of KfW, took place on the afternoon of January 24th, 2016 at Beirut Digital District. The talk was an opportunity for the supplement contributors to tell their stories with the power of speech, sound and interaction.

The Supplement was published in January 2017 with Annahar, Assafir, L'Orient-Le Jour and the Daily Star newspapers in Arabic, French and English.

In her article, Samaa talked about two young Palestinians, Ahmad and Rouba, residing in refugee camps in Lebanon, who defied their circumstances and initiated positive change in their community.

Ahmad, who took part in the discussion session, said, “What I hope for is to live outside the camp, not outside Lebanon. I wish it was possible and easy to do.” He added

details from his personal experience, clarifying how difficult it had become to get out of his comfort zone and face the ‘outside’ world.

Around 60 people from around Lebanon attended the event and contributed to making the conversation richer and more diverse. Coming from different backgrounds, Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian youth, and experts, writers, artists, academics, students and researchers mingled together on an occasion that most dubbed “unusual.”

The topics were both intriguing and controversial. While some of the participants agreed on a topic or point of view, other participants’ views diverged. However, the free flow and openness drove the conversation, while steering away from misconceptions and hate speech.

The participants discussed local peace building initiatives, the situation of displaced Syrians, respecting the Other, the role of the media, challenges in education, conflict resolution and post-war reconciliations, among other topics.

At the end of the discussion, Badri Bou Diab, a member of Fighters For Peace, said, “I am only afraid of the other because we never meet.” His statement highlights the role of such discussions and mediums in peace building and conflict prevention.

“What I hope for is to live outside the camp, not outside Lebanon. I wish it was possible and easy to do”

“Peace Building in Lebanon” News Supplement Visits Saida



Ruba Rahme, a young Palestinian woman displaced from the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria, has left her mark on her peers in the Ain al-Hilweh camp. Ruba, smiling and cheerful, shared her story in front of media representatives, journalists, youth from Palestinian camps, and NGO staff from Saida. They all participated in a discussion session organized by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project in Saida’s municipal hall on January 31st, 2017.

During the session, participants shared their opinions, comments, and suggestions regarding the 14th issue of the “Peace Building in Lebanon” News Supplement. Funded by KfW, this supplement was published by the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” project on December 22nd, 2016.

The realities and hopes of Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian youth in Lebanon were discussed. Ruba’s story was mentioned in journalist Samaa Abu Sharar’s article, “Palestinian Youth in Lebanon: Who Shall Bell the Cat?” Samaa described how Ruba devoted her time and efforts

to youth by seeking to lift them out of the void and their disaffection. The Palestinian journalist covered some problems facing Palestinian youth in the camps and talked about stereotypes imposed by the national media.

Participants of the session also exchanged different views regarding several civil peace issues mentioned in the supplement, such as delinquency, problems relating to historical narratives and education, and the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon. Suggestions in this session centered on the rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the need to give Palestinian youth a space to express themselves in the supplement, and the concepts of international and transitional justice.

This was the first time that a discussion session around the supplement took place outside Beirut. Many participants—of the previous sessions held in Beirut over the past three years—had suggested to move discussions outside Beirut and gather more diverse feedback on the supplement.

“Saida is different from any other Lebanese city. Lebanese and Palestinians living in it are socially, culturally, historically and economically connected,” concluded Talal Al Majzoub, one of the session’s participants.



Conference on Media Regulations: “Less Complaining, More Solutions”



“I will be waiting for the recommendations of this conference to turn them into executive orders” said Minister of Information Melhem Riachy, during a two day conference organized by Maharat Foundation, in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in partnership with the Ministry of Information. Funded by the UK, the conference titled: “Comparative Cases from Around the World of the Role of the Media in Strengthening Peace and Social Stability: Which System and Model?” took place in Beirut on the 21st and 22nd of March.

It hosted a group of international and local media experts with practical, technical and legal experience in the regulation and management of the media in plural and divided democratic societies, in addition to university

professors, NGOs representatives and students. Participants carefully listened to the experiences shared by experts coming from the Balkans, Germany, Tunisia and Lebanon, during the first session on the role of the media in strengthening civil peace: Models from countries that suffered from civil wars or international conflicts. “This conference is an important space for debating the role of media in social cohesion” said Rabih El Haber, editor of Lebanon Files website and participant in the conference.

“This conference is an important space for debating the role of media in social cohesion”

The second session discussed the media regulatory frameworks, and offered cases on how to strike a balance between freedom and social responsibility. Among many international and Lebanese speakers, Marius Dragomir, Director of the Center for Media, Data and Society (CMDS), who mentioned the new challenges to independent journalism, mentioning the media’s role in either supporting peace building and social stability or contributing to destabilization, especially in deeply divided communities.

The legislative aspect of media regulations was the main focus of speakers and participants in the last session of the conference. Do the print and audio-visual laws guarantee both freedom and social responsibility? What is the role of the National Media Council, syndicates and media outlets? All these questions and many others were answered by speakers such as MP Ghassan Mkheiber, Lawyer Toni Mikhael, and legal expert in media laws at Maharat Foundation and Dr. Georges Sadaka, Dean of the Faculty of Information at the Lebanese University.

At the end of the conference, participants were engaged in a round table to discuss the state of the media in Lebanon and to put forward a vision and recommendations to protect the profession in Lebanon in light of international experiences.



Few days after the conference, Maharat and UNDP finalized the working paper to help develop the professional frameworks regulating the media currently in application in Lebanon. The working paper was shared with the participants before being delivered to the Minister of Information.

Most of the recommendations stressed on the need to hold extensive meetings and sessions to discuss the working paper with different linked fields and parties, involving media outlets representatives in the talks and sessions, calling all media outlets to adopt transparency when talking about funding, protecting journalists and their work based on labor law and encouraging the elaboration of pacts instead of laws and sanctions.

“I have benefited a lot from this conference. You don’t have the chance to meet prominent journalists and media professors everyday” said Layla Yammine, media and journalism student.

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

“Peace Building in Lebanon” project
Arab Bank Building - 6th Floor
Riad El Solh Street, Nejme, Beirut - Lebanon
Telephone: 01 980 583 or 70 119160