Peace Building in Lebanon phase 3: Strengthening Tripoli's Social Cohesion, project ID 00104490

General Information

Short Title: Tripoli PB Project
UNDP Programme/Portfolio: CPR and Peacebuilding
Geographic Coverage: North
Project Status: Ongoing
Start Date: 06 March 2017
Expected End Date: 06 December 2017
Implementing Agency: UNDP (Direct Execution) (UNDP)
Last Updated: 23 March 2017

Classification

MDG Goal: 9. N/A

Contact Information

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Donors & Budget

UNDP $400,000.00
Total $400,000.00

Target Groups /Beneficiaries

- Lebanese Citizens
- Municipalities
- Public at large
- Youth Groups

Project Details

Background

Since 2006, UNDP and through its Peace Building in Lebanon project, has been working on addressing the underlying causes of conflict in Lebanon and sought to create “safe spaces” for local identity groups to discuss their concerns openly. Since 2013, the project has been acting as a reference point for addressing the new challenges to civil peace in Lebanon caused by the high influx of Syrian refugees, being positioned as key actor in the Lebanon Response to the Impact of the Syrian crisis on social stability. The project has used its already existing strong networks with a wide range of stakeholders in this regards and built excellent new ones with the Syrian counterparts. The project helped different actors enhance mutual understanding of the different “Other”, develop relevant strategies to address tensions and transform conflicts in their own communities and spaces. Social cohesion was thus enhanced at the local, community and national levels, between Lebanese, and between Lebanese and Syrians through the work of civil society actors, youth, educators, media, NGOs and religious leaders as well as municipal council members and mukhtars. Work on community dialogues, collective memory, peace education, conflict sensitive reporting, creation of safe media spaces, developing local peace mechanisms, working with ex-fighters, was implemented across Lebanon. Partnerships with key national counterparts were also built mainly with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Building on the successes and lessons learned of the Peace Building in Lebanon project previous phases, and based on the Internal Review of Phase III conducted in June 2016, Peace Building in Lebanon phase 3: Strengthening Tripoli’s Social Cohesion project will focus on supporting local and national actors in Tripoli addressing local conflicts and working on reconciliation processes that addresses root causes of conflict in this city, which just went out of a long history of violence. The project will work on developing a local mechanism for social stability and social cohesion, covering its different aspect in a comprehensive manner, including working in school’s environments, with ex-fighter groups, with the local authorities and local actors and media. Thus the project includes the following three outputs:
1. Promoting social cohesion through developing a Mechanism for Social Stability
2. Promoting social cohesion through a Violence Free School
3. Support ex-fighters advocating for peace instead of war

Achievements & Expected Results

- Lebanon’s citizens
- Municipalities
- Public at large
- Youth Groups

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Achievements and Expected Results:
Three main outputs are envisioned:
1. Promoting social cohesion through developing a Mechanism for Social Stability
2. Promoting social cohesion through a Violence Free School
3. Support ex-fighters advocating for peace instead of war (responsible party: Fighters for Peace)

1- Promoting social cohesion through developing a Mechanism for Social Stability
The overall objective of this component is to reduce tension through strengthening relations and communication, with the municipality at large, between community members and the municipality and across communities and between Lebanese and Syrians. By encouraging common spaces and platforms UNDP aims to work on encouraging dialogue between different community groups and on engaging in serious processes of reconciliation that can lay the foundations of a sustainable peace.

2- Promoting social cohesion through a Violence Free School
Sectarian and political divisions are manifested at both the social and political levels. In the education sector there is a cause for concern on two fronts: the absence of peace education content in the curriculum and the stalemate in relation to the history narrative. on “Violence Free Schools” (VFS). The main objective of this activity is to contribute to creating a violent free environment inside an identified number of schools, hosting Syrian refugees while engaging teachers, students, school administrations as well as parents in the process.

3- Support ex-fighters advocating for peace instead of war
The fighting between Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh left hundreds of young men jobless, not educated and traumatized. These were dragged into a war all of a sudden at the same time that they were asked to retrieve out of it and hand over their arms. There are no guarantees that these same groups will not reengage into a new cycle of violence when the decision at the higher level is taken and when asked to. And even among those who did not take arms, youth in Tripoli are either divided based on sectarian, political or even social backgrounds, or facing a high risk of becoming divided. UNDP will support Fighters for Peace NGO, who had already started working in Tripoli, in up scaling their activities in the city and reach out to a larger number of beneficiaries including youth. The The project will support FFP members expand their already existing network of youth and ex fighters from Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh. It will also support them organize awareness sessions and camps, with these groups and the potential fighters, using their own experiences and stories, to promote for nonviolence and show them how destructive for the person is a war, using their common “war language” which can be much more convincing.

Issues & Difficulties
The risks and assumptions that can threaten the achievement of results of the project’s strategy as well as the mitigation measures are as follow:
Security situation in Tripoli: although peace has been restored in the city, risks of relapse into violence are unfortunately always an option. History has proved that these cycles are orchestrated by political groups who use Tripoli as a messenger scene in light of internal and regional events and developments; keeping in mind that events in Syria have traditionally affected directly the scene in Tripoli and any new development on that front might have implications on the city. UNDP will make sure to build strong ties with local organizations and authorities, in addition to stressing on the local ownership of the intervention in order to avoid being affected by the repercussions and the delays any security incident might have on the implementation of the activities.

Legislative national elections expected to take place in May 2017 might be a risk for the smooth implementation of the project. UNDP will make sure to build strong ties with local organizations and authorities, in addition to stressing on the local ownership of the intervention in order to avoid being affected by the repercussions and the delays elections might have.

Ramadan, the feast month for Muslim community is taking place between May and June this year. Tripoli being a conservative majority Muslim city, this month might delay some of the activities, since partners’ activity might slow down during that month.

The municipality of Tripoli is one of the most polarized municipalities in Lebanon. It has been drowning in internal fights since a long time, which has been jeopardizing any real effort for development work.

Bureaucratic delays. The assumption is that delays in milestone delivery may take place due to changes at the national level (e.g. change of government and thus appointment of new ministries). Also internal delays cause by UNDP rules and regulations should be taken into consideration. From another side, the project team will make sure to launch the processes of all related procurements, recruitments, etc. ahead of time by planning well.