

6196

Distr.  
GENERAL  
E/ESCWA/AGR/1999/8  
3 November 1999  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

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**RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH  
STRENGTHENING INSTITUTION BUILDING  
TWO CASE STUDIES FROM LEBANON**



**United Nations  
New York, 1999**

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## PREFACE

Within the framework of its work programme for 1999, the Agriculture Section - Sectoral Issues and Policies Division (SIPD) - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), has solicited the services of Ms. Lamia El-Moubayed, appointed on fixed term contractual agreement, to undertake a study on "Rural Community Development through Strengthening Institution Building: Two Case Studies from Lebanon".

The purpose of the study was to assess the institutional set-up of selected rural institutions (two case studies) by investigating their vision and goals, organizational and functional characteristics, service delivery mechanisms, human resources, revenues and expenditures, linkages with government/official agencies, NGOs, donors, etc., networking and gender mainstreaming, challenges and sustainability, etc.

Towards this end, two institutions were pre-selected by the Agriculture Section. The first, "Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association", a large local non-governmental organization active in rural community development in two geographical locations (South and Bekaa) and targeting small farmers in under-served villages. The second, "Arsal Rural Development Association", a community based rural development association working in Arsal - a peripheral and isolated village located on the semi-arid western slopes of the Anti-Lebanon mountains.

The ultimate objectives of the study were to highlight recent efforts in rural community development in Lebanon, develop an understanding of the strategic challenges facing a local NGO (case study 1) and a community based association (case study 2), the key organizational and management problems they face as they build their capacity to become sustainable and to enhance their role in the local community(ies) they serve and to provide elements for a plan of action to strengthen the process of institution building in rural areas.

The methodology adopted consisted of a preparatory phase (including desk review of secondary data sources and round-table discussions with experts), leading to the development of a rational, objectives, tentative outline and workplan (Annex 1) as well as a questionnaire (Annex 2) that was used in the investigation phase. The questionnaire was structured to capture basic information about the institutions, their organizational and operational environment, service delivery, etc. It allowed interaction with interviewees (key staff of the associations) during field visits, and compilation and analysis of information along the defined lines of questioning.

The round table discussion was instrumental in providing information/experiences on current activities by main institutions/organizations/UN-agencies-projects/etc. working in the field of rural community development, as well as insights on the challenges faced and measures to strengthen institutional capacity of local institutions.

The discussion highlighted the necessity to consider a priority the need to strengthen the capacity of local administration / government institutions in parallel to developing local associations. Interventions and efforts by local community based associations, UN agencies, NGOs, and others remain constrained by the lack of government scheme for area development and supportive government response to activities and efforts undertaken by these organizations.

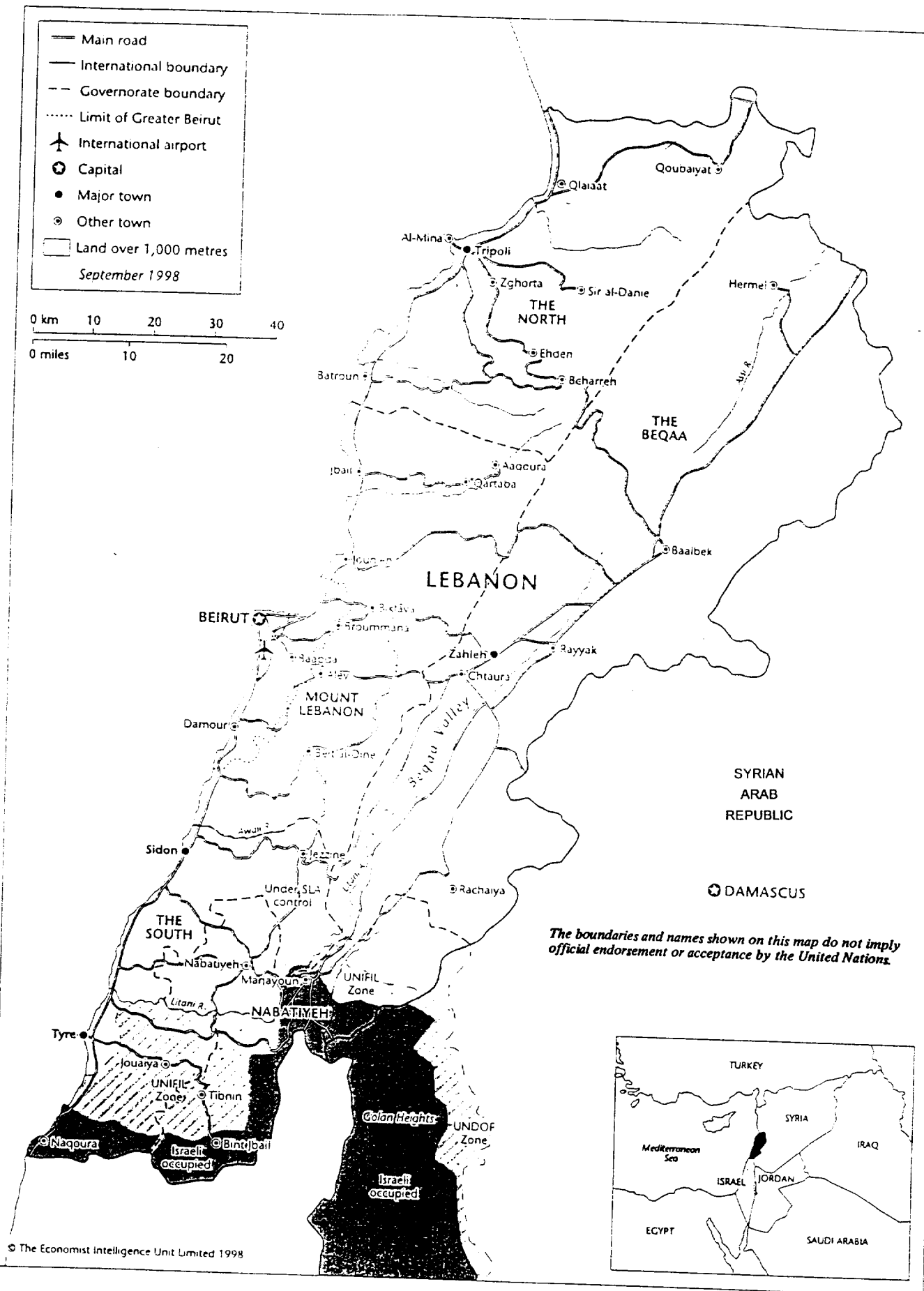
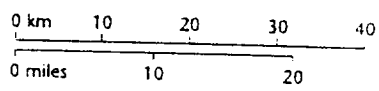
The study comprises four chapters. It sets out with an introductory review (Chapter I) of current issues pertaining to rural development in Lebanon starting by the political and economic context affecting rural development plans and policies. It draws attention, using selected quantitative indicators, to the sharp rural urban disparities, highlights government response to needs and lists some actions taken. Chapter I concludes with a brief discussion on the role and action of civil society organizations in rural community development and the challenges faced in building local institutional capacity.

The introductory review serves as a basis for the analysis of the institutional set-up of the two selected case studies (Chapter II and III). It is structured along the lines of questioning set in the questionnaire and draws on international experience and current management thinking in helping analyze the role and work of these associations.

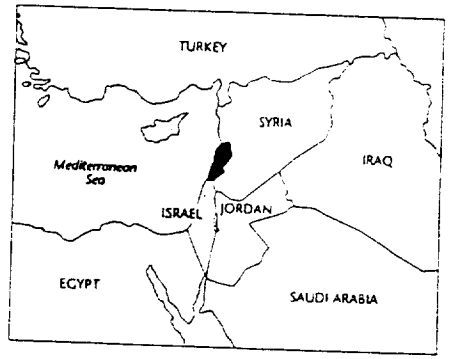
The study concludes with recommendations on strategies to strengthen the process of institution building in rural areas including general and specific actions targeting the two main stakeholders: local community associations and local government. In addition to proposals (with objectives and detailed descriptions) for a data base on local development associations and a training program on local institutional development to be supported by a strategy for balanced development and support in data collection and publishing.

Due acknowledgments to key staff of the two associations namely Mr. Ibrahim Ismail, Director General and Mr. Hassan Ali Atwi, Manager of the Agricultural Department, Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association, and Mr. Kassem Al-Shab, President of Arsal Rural Development Association for their cooperation and kind assistance. Thanks are also extended to the staff of SIPD-ESCWA.

- Main road
  - International boundary
  - - - Governorate boundary
  - ..... Limit of Greater Beirut
  - ✈ International airport
  - ★ Capital
  - Major town
  - Other town
  - Land over 1,000 metres
- September 1998



*The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter I of the study points to the historical undervalue of balanced regional development in the political and economic agenda in Lebanon, and it being the main subject of polemics between civil society and government authorities especially in the post-war reconstruction phase.

Indeed, problems of low levels of production and productivity in rural areas, deterioration of the terms of trade, urbanization, etc., date back from the pre-war area and were further exacerbated by the civil war. In the post-war era, the increasing burdens of poverty, rising public deficit, escalating public debt, discounted social considerations, economic growth and reconstruction activities mainly geared to public infrastructure and services in the Capital largely amplified the disparities. Furthermore, recurring incidents in southern Lebanon, occasionally spilling over areas of the Bekaa and South of Beirut, deteriorated living conditions and economic activity of local population in rural areas of South Lebanon and West Bekaa.

Chapter I underlines the constraint for rural development posed by the lack of an agricultural development policy though agriculture continues to be the base of rural economies and the major source of income for about 25 to 30 percent of the population – observations that are supported by the historically low - decreasing in real terms - public expenditures for both agriculture and irrigation (0.6 percent of total government expenditures for the period 1994-1998 excluding subsidies for tobacco, wheat and sugarbeet).

The lack of an agricultural development policy has always posed a problem to rural development endeavors especially in what concerns ordering of local development priorities, better orienting CSOs efforts, prioritization, coordination, leadership, programming, and evaluation efforts.

The review of available key indicators disaggregated by regionally significant breakdowns (Mhafazat level) captures regional disparities in employment and unemployment, poverty, access to basic social services including education, health, basic infrastructure and financial services. It reveals that poverty is primarily and disproportionately a rural phenomenon – poverty in rural areas being more than double that in urban areas and deprivation, in terms of education, health and other basic social services twice as important in the regions than in Beirut and Mount Lebanon as evidenced by those indicators. Also, access to basic infrastructure and services.

For example, indicators show that children in rural areas are less likely to remain in schools, enroll in secondary levels, and when they do they benefit from a lesser quality and efficient education systems as compared to the national average. Their chances of healthy survivals are lowest than city children and their opportunities to work, advance and enjoy welfare are less. Because of such disparities more people tend to live in urban or urbanized villages.

Chapter I notes that social development, implicitly focusing on poverty alleviation in disadvantaged areas, emerged in government agenda, in 1997, following outbursts of dissatisfaction in rural area. In order to address these challenges, government collaboration with the UN system, various other donors and institutions took a noteworthy course in the late 1990s with noteworthy programs and projects implemented in the various sectors and regions. A short description of relevant programs/projects and budgets provide an insight of current government efforts to respond to the long-standing needs.

A turnaround in policy is expected at the start of the new century as the new government initiated a new comprehensive five years development plan and a financial reform program that are expected to redefine national priorities along priorities of social cohesion and balanced development. The most important and awaited development remains the preparation by the Ministry of Agriculture of the five years plan for agricultural development for the period 2000-2004, to be integrated in the master plan for development and reconstruction mentioned (details of the preliminary plan are listed).

Chapter I concludes with a brief discussion on the role and action of civil society organizations (CSOs) in rural community development, them being pioneers of remarkable initiatives and activities, and recently becoming partners of many government institutions in delivering specialized services (environment) and services to peripheral areas.

It underlines some challenges facing CSOs as they move from war emergency to peace and development work and as they build their capacity to become equal partners of other stakeholders, in identifying priorities, planning projects, generating funds and accessing donors funds, successfully implement projects and sustain credibility in the eyes of their public and financiers.

The review in chapter I serves as the basis for the analysis of the institutional set-up of the two selected case studies (Chapter II and III). The analysis is structured along the line of questioning set in the questionnaire drawing on international experience and current management thinking in helping analyze the role and work of the two associations:

- Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association, A large non-governmental organization, active in rural community development in two geographical locations (South and Bekaa), and targeting small farmers in under-served villages, and
- Arsal Rural Development Association, a community based rural development association, working in Arsal; a peripheral and isolated village located on the semi-arid western slopes of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains.

Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association stands out as an organization with a well-defined mission, vision and target group, and a clear manifested political affiliation. It is mainly active in two fields: engineering and agriculture and provides also specific services in response to emergency needs such as damage repairs caused by Israeli aggressions, supply of potable water, electricity, garbage disposal, etc. Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association has evolved to become one of the most prominent Lebanese civil society organizations operating at the grass-root level. As the analysis shows, it is by far one of the most organized and equipped organization. Furthermore, it has a large and focused operation, operates with an annual budget of US\$ 5 million and employs around one hundred staff, all men.

Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association has a clear organizational structure that has evolved over time, went through a restructuring exercise that further strengthened its institutional environment and increased the impact of its activities. Noteworthy of its organizational model are its strong planning, goal-setting and decision-making mechanisms systematic reporting and group evaluation traditions, strong leadership from the technical, human and conceptual points of view and prevalent cooperation and communication across structure – characteristics which appear to be keys to its efficient and effective operational environment and timely delivery. However, the association is not open to outside members. The general committee and staffing is restricted to people of a specific religious and political affiliation.

Arsal Rural Development association is a volunteer-based, independent, non-profit, community association with the objective to plan and implement development projects and initiate activities that contribute to improving the livelihoods of the Aرسالis. Towards this end, the association collaborates with programs and projects initiated by the government, CSOs and donors community and seeks to build strong linkages with the various stakeholders. The association through its approach and creative initiatives has broken the isolation of this remote and isolated village.

Arsal Rural Development Association has played a critical role in building awareness of the community to its concerns and potentials, and strong commitment to its advancement. It has rallied the people of Aرسال, empowered and oriented their collaborative effort to lobby for government assistance and donors interest. By creating a forum for interaction, participation and debate among the women and men of Aرسال, it was able, during a period of nine years, to organize and manage a plethora of development projects that are undertaken with selected partners. While the activities undertaken may represent small steps forward as compared to the size of deprivation and needs, their impact is large, trickling down to other neighboring communities. Indeed, Aرسال Rural Development Association has become a model for neighboring villages (Kiyaa', Fakha, and others) who are now trying to institute similar community associations in order to promote their needs and involve volunteers from their village to participate in the development of their community."

By virtue of their activities and efforts, the rural community of Aرسال and Aرسال Rural Development Association have been pointed at, on various occasions, and by various groups, as an example of good practice in rural community development.

Chapter IV of the study proposes based on the introductory review and the findings of the case studies, strategies to strengthen the process of institution building in rural areas. It highlights that local institutional capacity building for rural development is a lengthy process that requires time and resources but most of all appropriate strategies and concepts that focus on the two stakeholders: civil society and local government. It has to be demand driven as much as supply oriented and therefore necessitates actions to encourage commitment by local community associations. Awareness and sensitization workshops are therefore needed to promote an adaptable approach to change, a willingness to explore alternatives.

Elements of a plan for institutional development at the level of local community associations thus includes (1) training programs aimed at improving skills and producing leaders including training on mechanisms for proposing and reaching agreements on goals, devising strategies, motivating others, resolving conflicts, overseeing projects implementation, etc.; (2) deployment of "catalysts" – persons who specialize in community organizations and are given the mandate to getting the institutional processes within a community started; (3) strengthening institutional networks and support basis through area networks (community associations working in similar areas); (4) strengthening capacity for economic resources mobilization and management through strengthening advocacy/communication/information capacity, financial accounting (training on bookkeeping, inventory management, cost-accounting and investment decision making, etc.), expanding the information base on potential donors and funds availability, collection schemes (periodic donation campaigns, etc.), etc.

At local government level, decentralization is key to strengthening institutional capacity for rural community development by bringing official decision making closer to local levels and discharging the potentials of local groups. After long years of inactivity, and given the significant budget constraints, lack of technical and managerial capacity, etc., local governments are likely to feel threatened by an increase in local institutional capacity at the level of the communities. This may undermine or at least not promote local institutional development efforts. Supporting local government efforts and municipalities in achieving greater autonomy, building their capacity and activating their role as service providers is therefore a key priority. Awareness and sensitization of local administration and municipalities towards increased participation by local community and constructive interaction between government and civil society strengthens local community and the basis for local development.

Such interactions are ingredients of long-term peace building and local development in Lebanon.

Chapter IV concludes with specific proposals (with detailed objectives and descriptions) for establishing a database on local development associations, and a training program on local institutional development. It underlines two important challenges where actions by the Lebanese government are crucially needed. First, the challenge to devise and implement a strategy for balanced development on a countrywide basis in order to sustain the positive achievements and reverse current disparity trends in under-served areas. Second, the need to regularly collect and render available, especially through on-line publishing (Internet), data disaggregated by urban/rural and/or regionally significant breakdowns (Caza level maybe) capturing regional disparities and disparities within specific groups. Efforts need to also focus on harmonizing definitions and adjusting current figures as well as collecting data on indicators where data are poor or non-available. These actions are of great value as they allow better monitoring of the socio-economic scenes at the local regional level, support policy analysis, research, etc., and provide as well information for the design and planning of development programmes.

## 0- INTRODUCTION

### 0.1 BACKGROUND

Within the framework of its work programme for 1999, the Agriculture Section - Sectoral Issues and Policies Division (SIPD) - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), has solicited the services of a Consultant, Ms. Lamia El-Moubayed, appointed on fixed term contractual agreement to undertake, as per the terms of references, the following tasks:

- a) Assessment of existing institutional structures of selected rural institutions (2 case studies);
- b) Identification of shortcomings: institutional structures, financial resources, human development, vision and goals, networking and gender mainstreaming;
- c) Plan of action to strengthen the process of institution building in rural areas.

Towards this end, two institutions were pre-selected by the Agriculture Section for the case studies.



The first, Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association, a large non-governmental organization, active in rural community development in two geographical locations (South and Bekaa), and targeting small farmers in under-served villages.



The second, Aarsal Rural Development Association, is a community based rural development association, working in Aarsal; a peripheral and isolated village located on the semi-arid western slopes of the Anti-Lebanon mountains.

### 0.2 OBJECTIVE:

The ultimate objective of the study is to help develop an understanding of the strategic challenges facing a local NGO (case study 1) and a community based association (case study 2), the key organizational and management problems they face as they build their capacity to become sustainable and to enhance their role in the local community(ies) they serve.

### 0.3 METHODOLOGY

The preparatory phase consisted of a desk review of secondary data sources including references, reports and background information as well as discussions with key resource persons leading to the development of a rational, objectives, tentative outline and workplan (Annex 1) as well as a questionnaire (Annex 2) to be used in the investigation phase.

#### 0.3.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was developed to serve as a structured yet facilitated process that allows interaction with interviewees along a defined line of questioning. It was structured with the intention to capture:

- Basic information about the institutions: origins and motivations, legal status, dates and reasons for establishment, geographical location and outreach, range of activities and services provided;
- Organizational and functional characteristics: membership and membership growth, criteria, organizational structure and its evolution, leadership, current number of staff and technical capabilities, capacity development, communication, etc.;
- Service delivery: planning and decision making, project life cycle, information base, advocacy;
- Revenues and expenditures: extent and nature of resources deployed, sources of funding and other support;
- Linkages with government/official agencies, NGOs, donors, etc.;
- Challenges and sustainability: financial and technical.



### **0.3.2 THE ROUND TABLE**

Prior to launching the investigation phase, a round table discussion was convened to which a selected number of representatives of non-governmental organizations, local community associations and managers of regional development programmes/projects were invited (please refer to Annex 3: Minutes of Meeting).

The objectives of this discussion were to exchange information/experiences about current activities by main institutions/organizations/UN-agencies-projects/etc., in the field of rural community development and to discuss challenges and measures to strengthen institutional capacity of local institutions working in rural community development.

The participants dwelled into types and combinations of local institutions supporting agricultural development activities in rural areas of Lebanon and measures to enable them to function efficiently and effectively such as training of members, leadership development, relationship with local administration and local government institutions, forging networks of local institutions having various linkages, relationship with the private sector, etc.

The discussion highlighted the necessity of considering the priority need to strengthen the capacity of local administration / government institutions; interventions and efforts by local community based associations, UN agencies, NGOs, and others being constrained by the lack of any government scheme for area development or supportive government response to activities and efforts undertaken by these organizations.

### **0.3.3 INVESTIGATION & ANALYSIS**

Interviews with key staff of the selected associations were conducted at different points in time, information compiled, analyzed and reviewed. Field visits to the institutions' headquarters and projects were made. Documents, reports, pamphlets, etc. were obtained from the two associations complementing the information gathered. Statutory documents, rules and regulations, practices and procedures were also examined.

### **0.3.4 STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE REPORT**

The following report is structured in four chapters.

It sets out with an introductory review of current issues pertaining to rural development in Lebanon starting by the effect of the political and economic context on rural development plans and policies. It draws attention, using selected quantitative indicators, to the sharp rural urban disparities, highlights government response to the needs and lists some actions taken. It concludes with the role and action of civil society organizations in rural community development and the challenges faced in building local institutional capacity.

This introductory reviews serves as the basis for the analysis of the institutional set-up of the two selected cases studies (Chapter 2 and 3). The analysis is structured along the line of questioning set-in the questionnaire (refer to section 0.3.1), drawing on international experience and current management thinking in helping analyze the role and work of these associations.

The study concludes with recommendations on strategies to strengthen the process of institution building in rural areas including general and specific actions.

# 1- RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN LEBANON

## 1.1 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT AFFECTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Since the end of the war in 1990, successive post-war governments have faced a number of political and economic challenges namely the liberation of parts of the country occupied by Israel, the return of 425,000 internally displaced persons to their towns and villages of origin, monetary stabilization, political and administrative reform, and launching the process of reconstruction and development.

Starting 1992, the Lebanese national authorities succeeded in launching the process of economic recovery and the programme of reconstruction and development (Horizon 2000). But, despite the remarkable achievements in stabilizing security, restoring government authority and bringing about political and economic stability, the Lebanese economy, which at the end of 1997 was more than 70 percent larger in real terms than it was in 1990, represented still 60 percent of the level reached in 1974<sup>1</sup>. Considerable difficulties were experienced in the reactivation of the productive sectors particularly agriculture.

Government policies and the Horizon 2000 plan were criticized for extorting a heavy price on the economy, namely increasing public deficit and escalating public debt, for having kept social considerations at a distance from the programme of reconstruction and development, for favoring the center and discounting the development needs of rural areas and the various rural urbanized towns in the different regions. Indeed, benefits from economic growth and reconstruction mainly geared to public infrastructure and services in the Capital did not trickle down to the rural areas of Lebanon thus exacerbating the historical disparities and distortions in the country – distortions dating back from the 1950s and earlier.

Private sector activities also regenerated the traditional sectoral and regional imbalances specifically as it regards provisions of financial services. The major share of commercial credits thus went to trade and construction (67 percent in 1997) while the share of agriculture represented a mere 1.6 percent. As for the regional distribution of credit, 95 percent of total credit disbursed were allocated to Beirut and Mount Lebanon regions<sup>2</sup>.

The lack of clear balanced regional development strategy was a main subject of controversy and discussions among civil society and government authorities. The lack of an agricultural development policy has been repeatedly mentioned as a major constraint for rural development, especially that agriculture continues to be the base of rural economies and the major source of income for about 25 to 30 percent of the population. Historically public expenditures for both agriculture and irrigation were low, even decreasing in real terms<sup>3</sup>, reflecting the declining role of agriculture in the economy and the interest of policy makers. The contribution of agriculture to GDP thus fell from 20 percent in the pre-war era to about 10 percent of GDP in the 1990s

Starting 1997, following outbursts of dissatisfaction among population of Baalbeck-Hermel and other areas – outbursts which were not easily calmed even after official promises to ease poverty in rural areas – social development, implicitly focusing on poverty alleviation in disadvantaged areas, emerged in government agenda. Poverty mapping, in 1997, revealed that poverty is primarily and disproportionately a rural phenomenon – poverty in rural areas being more than double that in urban areas and deprivation in terms of education, health and other basic social services much more acute (for details, please refer to section 1.2). In order to address these challenges, government collaboration with the UN system, various other donors and institutions took a noteworthy course (section 1.3).

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Development Cooperation Report, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Resident Coordinator System in Lebanon, Common Country Assessment 1998 (CCA), Part I:CCA Report and Part II: Follow-up on International Conferences, December 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Public expenditure for the 1994-98 period averaged 0.6percent of total government budget. About 0.25percent of GDP went to agriculture and 0.4percent of budget and 0.25percent of GDP for irrigation (these figures do not include substantial producers subsidies for tobacco, wheat and sugarbeet respectively US\$ 25 million in 1997 for Tobacco and US\$ 64 million in 1996 for whet and sugarbeet combined – figures which exceed the combined expenditures of MOA and MOHER (irrigation only)).

Notwithstanding the strengthening of the democratic process entailed by the highly successful municipal elections<sup>4</sup> held in the spring of 1998 for the first time in 35 years, these elections reactivated socio-economic and community life at the local level and paved the way for addressing issues of decentralization. The municipal elections also brought about local administration as an additional player in community development as well as explicit official emphasis on regional and municipal development issues.

The newly elected municipal councils are now trying to reactivate social and economic activity at the local level. Significant budget constraints, lack of technical and managerial capacity at the level of these administrations as well as long years of inactivity at a time when many developments occurred in approaches and mechanisms for local governance, constrain these administrations' actions and linkages with other players and blur as well the scope and limits of their role.

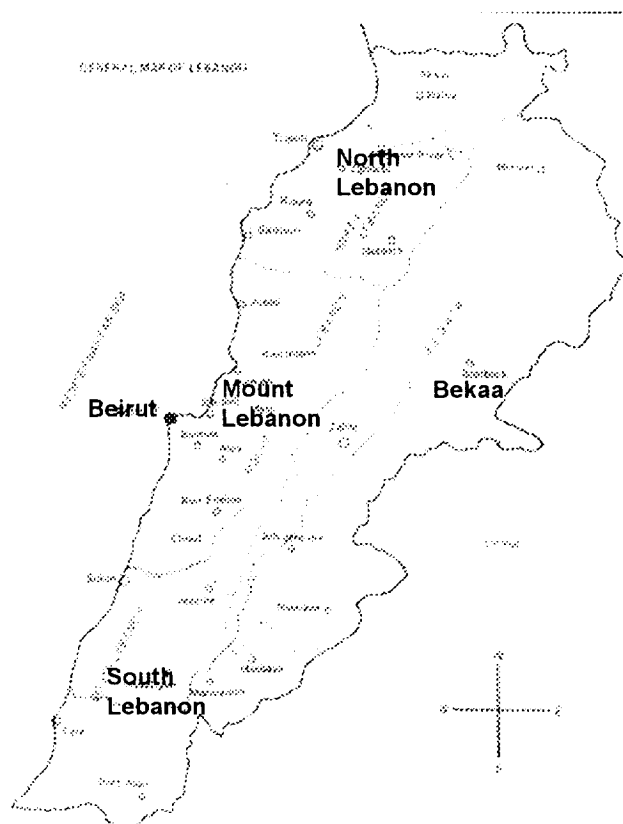
Starting 1999, the new government initiated a financial reform programme bringing major revisions to what was envisaged in Horizon 2000 as well as preparatory work for a new comprehensive five years development plan. The five years plan and public investment programme, expected by the end of 1999, are hoped to reassess and redefine national priorities along priorities of social cohesion and balanced development. As per declarations by the government, the plan will give increased priority to social concerns and to the environment, and will seek to provide needed support to the development of the productive sectors.

## 1.2 RURAL / URBAN DISPARITIES

Given the overall weakness in data collection and statistics at the level of government agencies, data on the levels and trends of urban and rural growth as well as on disparities are pretty much scarce. When available, questions arise to the degree of reliability and comparability. Data is crucially needed though for the proper identification of patterns of growth in rural areas and understanding the priorities and processes of development in the various rural contexts.

Although some government agencies have tried to produce regionally disaggregated data as well as urban/rural disaggregated data, the distinction "*urban/rural*", within the national context, has been subject to controversies as criteria defining urban and rural areas differ from study to study and agency to agency. It is unfortunately not clear whether these distinctions are made on the basis of predominance of non-agricultural activities, population size, population density or other criteria. It remains crucial though, for the soundness of any comparative analysis, that criteria and designations used to differentiate between urban and rural be elaborated and definitions standardized.

The following overview will thus be based on a comparison of available data disaggregated by Mohafazat i.e. administrative divisions.



<sup>4</sup> Participation was estimated at 55 percent of eligible voters. The elections covered the entire country with the exception of the security belt, and about 20 towns and villages in areas of displacement where reconciliation has yet to take place mainly in Aley, Baabda, Chouf and West Bekaa cazas.

## 1.2.1 POPULATION TRENDS AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT

The high rate of urbanization is one important demographic characteristic of Lebanon affecting economic activities and development trends in the country. Urban population constitutes more than 80 percent of total population (80.8 percent according to the Population & Housing Survey, 1996) with this rate highest in Mount Lebanon (92.5 percent).

Furthermore, population is distributed unevenly among regions. Beirut and Mount Lebanon account for 50 percent of total population whereas only 12.9 percent live in the Bekaa - the largest of the six Mohafazas and where agriculture is most practiced. More striking is the fact that urbanization, even in this area, is quite sharp with 65.6 percent of Bekaa population living in urban agglomerations. The same is observed in the south where 72.4 percent of population live in urban agglomerations or urbanized villages<sup>5</sup>.

Compared to other Arab countries (55 percent) and to industrialized countries (75 percent), these rates are quite alarming and constitute important information when drawing area development plans or undertaking community development activities.

## 1.2.2 ECONOMIC & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Sectoral and regional imbalances date back from the prewar era. Some rural areas, such as the Baalbeck-Hermel and Akkar regions, have remained profoundly poor and they have, as a result, seen a massive exodus of their population. Already, in response to this bias, the provinces have frequently protested against a center (Beirut) that is perceived to have flaunted their growth and affluence.

Problems of low levels of production and productivity, deterioration of the terms of trade, urbanization, etc., were further exacerbated by the civil war. Starting the 1990s, increasing burdens of poverty, public debt, economic growth, etc., amplified the disparities. On the other hand, recurring incidents in southern Lebanon, occasionally spilling over areas of the Bekaa and South of Beirut, have deteriorated living conditions and economic activity of the local population in the rural areas of south Lebanon and West Bekaa.

### 1.2.2.1 Employment & Unemployment

Economic activity rates are highest in Beirut (54 percent) and lowest in the regions: Bekaa (44.2 percent), South and North (around 48 percent)<sup>6</sup>. These values, however do not reflect the actual activity rates including employment in the informal sector and unpaid family labor, which are very prevalent in the remote agricultural regions of the country.

Explicit unemployment, estimated in 1997 at 8.6 percent (9 percent for males and 7.2 percent for females), is higher in regions outside Beirut, with the worst results recorded in North Lebanon (10.3 percent) and the Bekaa (10 percent). Other forms of implicit unemployment are more important, but difficult to measure: marginal occupation in informal sector, underpaid or temporary jobs, over employment in public sector, etc. One notable fact is the proportion of working children which is much higher in regions outside the capital (4.2 percent in the Bekaa and 3.4 percent in South Lebanon compared to 2.6 percent in Beirut)<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.2.2.2 Poverty

Income poverty rather than human poverty is a major challenge in rural areas of Lebanon as evidenced by the few available data and literature<sup>8</sup> (HDR, 1997). Although the three universal indicators of

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<sup>5</sup> Population & Housing Survey, 1996. The Ministry of Social Affairs & UNFPA, 1996, Beirut-Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup> Household Living Standards Measurement Survey, 1997. National Employment Office-Ministry of Labor & UNDP/ILO, Beirut-Lebanon.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Lebanon Human Development Indicator (HDI) ranking is better than its GDP ranking as per UNDP Human Development Report, 1997.

poverty: headcount index, poverty gap index, and squared poverty gap index (severity index) – are not yet available in Lebanon, the Gini coefficient which was published for the first time in 1997 by the Central Administration for Statistics showed important regional disparities especially in the South and Bekaa regions (0.438 and 0.409 respectively compared to 0.435 national average).

The widespread regional distribution of income poverty is further emphasized by values of other poverty related indicators such as average wage rates which are much lower in the Bekaa and North Lebanon than they are in Beirut, and the unsatisfied basic needs index (for households) which is highest in Nabatiyeh (51 percent), the North (43.8 percent) and in the Bekaa (40.6 percent) reaching more than twice its value in Beirut (18.4 percent)<sup>9</sup>.

Other income related indicators also show regional disparities in terms of income savings. Only 7.2 percent of households in the North and 9.8 percent in the South are able to save compared to 11.3 percent in Beirut, and almost 50 percent (48.9 percent) of families in North Lebanon have to borrow to satisfy their minimum needed living expenses compared to 38.3 percent national average<sup>10</sup>. The dependency ratio<sup>11</sup> also depicts regional disparities varying from 44.7 percent in Beirut, to 68.8 percent in North Lebanon (reaching 86.6 percent in Akkar), and uncovers the large burden on the young working population<sup>12</sup>.

### 1.2.3 ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

As the indicators below will show, deprivation in terms of education and health insurance is twice as important in the regions than in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Also, access to basic infrastructure and services.

#### 1.2.3.1 Education

Children in rural areas are less likely to remain in schools, enroll in secondary levels, and when they do they benefit from a lesser quality and efficient education systems as compared to the national average.

With respect to access to basic social services, deprivation assessed in terms of education was found alarming in North Lebanon (46.3 percent), the Bekaa (41.4 percent) and the South (37.2 percent) compared to 20.7 percent in Beirut, highlighting the large disparities among regions<sup>13</sup>. Adult illiteracy rates are highest in the regions reaching 16.7 percent in North Lebanon, and around 14 percent in the South and Bekaa, which is almost 2.5 times more than illiteracy rates in Mount Lebanon (6.6 percent), and 1.5 times higher than the national average (11.6 percent)<sup>14</sup>.

Repetition rates in primary, intermediate and secondary show increased figures in areas outside Beirut and Mount Lebanon. In North Lebanon, these rates reach for the three levels respectively 4 times, 3.5 times and twice as much as rates in Beirut and nearly twice and 1.5 times as much as the national average, suggesting that the education system in the regions is less efficient.

Moreover, the net enrollment ratio at the secondary level is almost double in Beirut (47.1 percent) than in the Bekaa (22.6 percent), Northern Lebanon (22.7 percent), or Nabatieh (23.3 percent)<sup>15</sup>. High rates of dropouts are also noted and a significant number of school-aged children, especially in secondary are not in schools, with highest rates in Northern Lebanon, Baalbeck and the South.

<sup>9</sup> Mapping of Living conditions, 1998. Ministry of Social Affairs & UNDP, Beirut – Lebanon.

<sup>10</sup> Household Living Standards Measurement Survey, 1997. National Employment Office-Ministry of Labor & UNDP/ILO, Beirut-Lebanon.

<sup>11</sup> Number of persons in a household dependent for their livelihoods on one person.

<sup>12</sup> Population & Housing Survey, 1996. The Ministry of Social Affairs & UNFPA, 1996, Beirut-Lebanon.

<sup>13</sup> Mapping of Living conditions, 1998. Ministry of Social Affairs & UNDP, Beirut – Lebanon.

<sup>14</sup> Population & Housing Survey, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

Indeed, the disparities in quality of education were highlighted by the Education Research and Development Center (CRDP)<sup>16</sup>. The survey carried by CRDP highlighted a number of areas of concern notably related to quality of education in the regions and other concerns relating to human resources development. They revealed that the quality of the learning achieved by pupils measured based on their mastering of a set of nationally defined basic learning competencies is less in the regions than in the center, specifically in the Bekaa and other rural areas<sup>17</sup>. Other studies have shown that qualifications of teachers have remained at a constant relatively low level in those areas, around 50 percent of them being under-qualified.

#### 1.2.3.2 Health

Health wise, less people are covered by health insurance or social security systems in the South (23.5 percent), the North (34.6 percent) and the Bekaa (35.6 percent) than in Beirut (55.3 percent)<sup>18</sup>.

The health conditions in the remote and rural areas show large disparities between the different regions of the country. Infant mortality rates in rural areas are elevated. data available reveal that at national level, infant mortality rate (U1MR) has decreased to 28 per thousand with practically no gap between females and males. However, significant regional disparities continue to exist with very high rates in the Bekaa (35.9/000), South (35.2/000) and Northern Lebanon (51.2/000). Child mortality (U5MR) is more than two times higher in under-served areas such as North Lebanon, South Lebanon, and the Bekaa as compared to Beirut and Mount Lebanon<sup>19</sup>. Largely, access to health services is more limited in remote areas of the country.

#### 1.2.3.3 Infrastructure

Although access to housing is more available in the regions than in the Capital, the quality of housing in terms of access to water networks, potable water, and sanitation is sharply lower in the regions<sup>20</sup>. Less than 1 percent of households in Beirut do not have access to water networks compared to 9 percent in North Lebanon and 8.5 percent in Bekaa. Accessibility to sanitation is almost seven times higher in Beirut than in the Bekaa and twelve times more than the North. The situation is much worse as it concerns access to potable water<sup>21</sup>. Lately, these disparities have been reported in the preliminary results of the village survey undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO (project FAO/UTF/LEB/015). Access to public transportation facilities of all sorts is quasi in-existent in remote areas.

#### 1.2.3.4 Financial Services

The major share of commercial credits goes to trade and construction (67 percent in 1997) while the share of agriculture represents a mere 1.6 percent. The regional distribution of credit, 95 percent of the total being allocated to Beirut and Mount Lebanon regions, is a self-commentator<sup>22</sup>.

### **1.3 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO BALANCED DEVELOPMENT**

Repeated protests caused by these acute disparities have pushed the Lebanese government to explore policies of decentralization and regional development, and to consider measures for expansion of the sectors forming the basis of the regions' economy. The government has also envisioned measures to step up public investment in under-served rural areas, and to develop public services at the level of the local economy.

<sup>16</sup> Survey on learning achievement in eighth grade, undertaken with support of UNESCO and UNICEF and complementing a similar study undertaken in 1996 at the primary school level.

<sup>17</sup> CRDP.1998 "Preliminary Statistics on Education for 1995-96 & 1996-97" and "Assessment of Learning Achievement for the Fourth Grade during 1995-96". Centre de Recherche Pédagogiques (CRDP), Beirut-Lebanon.

<sup>18</sup> Household Living Standards Measurement Survey, 1997. National Employment Office-Ministry of Labor & UNDP/ILO, Beirut-Lebanon.

<sup>19</sup> Lebanon Mother and Child Health Survey (PAPCHILD), 1998. League of Arab States and Ministry of Health, Lebanon.

<sup>20</sup> Mapping of Living conditions, 1998. Ministry of Social Affairs & UNDP, Beirut - Lebanon.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> Central Bank of Lebanon, Quarterly Reports, 1998.

In June 1997, a government decision was taken to increase support for balanced development with emphasis on under-served and neglected outlying areas. At the same time, the government increased direct allocations for improved access to, and delivery of social services. Balanced development has been on the discussion panel of 1998 budget proposal, through proposals for the implementation of a number of priority projects for US\$ 600,000<sup>23</sup>. Budget constraints however severely limited these investments. Only marginal amounts were actually approved, and donors, multilateral and bilateral cooperation thus contributed to financing most of interventions<sup>24</sup>. Indeed, realizing the multi-dimensional character of deprivation especially in rural areas, the Lebanese government in close collaboration with the UN system and other donors has been supporting various socio-economic development programmes in the regions in an attempt to focus interventions at the regional level.

### 1.3.1 ON-GOING ACTIONS<sup>25</sup>

An example of such is the pilot intervention in the Region of Baalbeck-Hermel within the context of the "Integrated Rural Development Programme for Baalbeck-Hermel" (US\$ 6.8 million), implemented by the Council for Development and Reconstruction, bilateral donors and UN agencies namely UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNDCP, and UNFPA. Within this region, these agencies, and recently UNESCO and ILO, are working together to support government's efforts. The project has a community-based approach, and has a broad focus on rural development.

Another community based area development scheme is the "Reintegration and Socio-Economic Rehabilitation Programme" (US\$ 4 million) carried by the Ministry of Displaced Persons, the Council for Development and Reconstruction, bilateral donors and UNDP. The project works at promoting and assisting the return of displaced persons in Mount Lebanon and the Chouf area and has a component for rural development and small scale credit schemes.

Other targeted initiatives include the "Basic Education Reform Programme" (US\$ 2 million) implemented by the Ministry of National Education and the National Council for Educational Research and Development in collaboration with UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO. The programme includes the comprehensive rehabilitation of managerial and teaching capacities in nearly 100 schools in under-served areas of the country to reduce regional disparities in educational progress and achievement.

The Ministry of Public Health is also working closely with NGOs and the UN system and other donors to improve planning and access to quality health services delivered by national health care systems with special emphasis on under-served regions and groups, including extensive work in the health reform sector. The underlying objective has been to improve key indicators of primary health to meet national targets and commitments made at international conferences. Significant progress was achieved with respect to developing basic health care programmes in the regions.

Work on reduction of disparities also included extensive work on poverty mapping, advocacy, improvement of service delivery and capacity building at the level of the Ministry of Social Affairs integrated development centers (64 active centers in the regions in 1998) with support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO. Priority interventions are being geared to most needy rural areas (Akkar, Baalbeck-Hermel, etc.) based on the result of the needs mapping.

The Ministry of Social Affairs with support from UNDP, UNIFEM, ESCWA and non-governmental organizations, is also implementing a "Women's Enterprise Development Project" (US\$ 450,000) under which 250 women across the country and especially in rural and remote areas benefit from training to enable them to start their own businesses. Mechanisms to promote access to small-scale credit for these women and others in need, notably in rural areas and areas of displacement, are being developed.

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<sup>23</sup> United Nations Resident Coordinator System in Lebanon, Common Country Assessment 1998 (CCA), Part I: CCA Report and Part II: Follow-up on International Conferences, December 1998.

<sup>24</sup> It seems unlikely that these measures will be implemented in the near future in the light of the recent contractions operated on government budget and expenditures. Clear "to implement" balanced regional development strategies are being awaited.

<sup>25</sup> For details about funding by donors and amounts, please refer to the UNDP Development Cooperation Report, various years.

At present, regional programmes to reduce social disparities and improve socio-economic conditions are under preparation for the Northern Akkar area (US\$ 3 million), and southern Lebanon (US\$ 2.3 million).

In agricultural development specifically, the Ministry of Agriculture has launched many activities towards the rehabilitation of its institutional capacity as well as that of the Tel Al Amara agricultural research and extension center and the Green Plan, including projects to rebuild agricultural schools and a reforestation project<sup>26</sup>. The Ministry has further launched a number of projects, noteworthy of which are the first agricultural census since 1932 (under the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Project), the Livestock production project and the American-Lebanese cooperation project for the development of livestock production.

A substantial part of the investments in recent programmes target rural areas including support to the UNDP-supported "Baalbeck-Hermel Integrated Rural Development Programme", which aims at increasing income of small farmers and replacing the production of illicit drugs.

Part of the Green Plan implemented "Agriculture Infrastructure Development Project" (US\$ 104.8 million financed by the World Bank and IFAD) are geared at developing land and water resources and increasing access to isolated rural areas.

The IFAD-supported "Small Holders Livestock Project" (US\$ 22.2 million, with IFAD and OPEC cofinancing) provides direct support to livestock growers and farmers (extension, credit, promotion of off-farm income generating activities especially in dairy).

The agriculture component (US\$ 11.8 million financed by IFAD) of the "Irrigation Rehabilitation and Modernization Project", works at increasing agricultural incomes, welfare and employment of small farmers, and strengthening essential agricultural services through provisions of extension/technology transfer services, construction of five small irrigation schemes along with ten hill lakes as well as institutional support to the Ministry of Agriculture and to the Green Plan for improving agricultural services in the rehabilitated areas.

In addition, irrigation schemes implemented by the Ministry of Hydraulics and Electrical Resources and the Litany River Authority target rural areas. These projects include schemes under the "Irrigation Rehabilitation and Modernization Project" (US\$ 57.2 million financed by the World Bank) in the Bekaa/Hermel, Akkar, and the South, and rehabilitation of small irrigation schemes programme (US\$ 30.7 million) expected to benefit small farmers<sup>27</sup>.

A proposed "Rural Development Project" with an estimated cost of US\$ 70 million (World Bank estimated support at 40-50 million) is being negotiated aiming at providing potable water for villages in Akkar, Baalbeck, and Hermel; rehabilitating agricultural roads; reducing poverty and social inequity through financing of job-creating activities; and generally promoting development in rural areas.

### 1.3.2 THE FIVE YEARS AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2000-2004)

The most important and awaited development remains the preparation by the Ministry of Agriculture of the five years plan for agricultural development for the period 2000-2004, to be integrated in the master plan for development and reconstruction mentioned in section 1.1.

Despite the plethora of problems that have caused the decline in importance and productivity of the agricultural sector over the years, and despite the questions raised as to the viability of the sector, this five years agricultural development plan is being prepared with the underlying premise that agriculture in Lebanon must be improved and investments herewith made. It is hoped to emphasize the contribution of agriculture to the local and national economy, its role in providing a large proportion of income to rural people

<sup>26</sup> The Ministry of Agriculture Institutional Capacity Building Project (US\$ 2.45 million), Rehabilitation of Agricultural Schools I and II (US\$ 2.66 million financed by the Saudi Development Fund), and the Forestry Project (US\$ 10.5 million).

<sup>27</sup> Rehabilitation and modernization of surface irrigation infrastructure for five major irrigation schemes covering 17,200 ha (Yammouneh, Qasmieh/Ras El Ain, Akkar El Bared, Dannieye and South Bekaa), and about 24 small/medium schemes covering another 10,000 ha, which tend to focus on disadvantaged and poor areas.



and in limiting rural-urban migration, and the fact that sound agricultural practices prevent degradation of natural resources.

The plan is being developed under the "Agricultural Infrastructure Development Project" (World Bank Loan 4092, August 1996). The derived investment plan is estimated at US\$ 413 million including a US\$ 100 million credit scheme.

The plan, which is built around three corner stones: (i) basic premises and general targets, (ii) regulatory framework and (iii) proposed projects<sup>28</sup>, sets the preliminary target of increasing agricultural production by 15 percent<sup>29</sup>. It lists six strategic objectives namely: (i) preserving agricultural and environmental resources, (ii) providing for a competitive agricultural production, (iii) increasing food production, (iv) facilitating the marketing of agricultural produce, (v) promoting agro-industries and (vi) achieving rural development through implementing the five cited objectives. Expected results include increasing farmers' income, improving access to social services and promoting contribution of women to agricultural production.

The plan emphasized the multidimensional context of rural and community development clearly noting that *"in rural development the social dimensions shall prevail over economic aspects emphasizing the priority of access to social services over economic returns. Based on this premise, the plan stresses the importance of creating job opportunities in rural areas in order to limit rural-urban migration and prevent the creation of poverty belts in urban areas"*.

## 1.4 THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs) IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Fundamental freedoms conducive to an active role by civil society prevail to a large measure in Lebanon. Non governmental organizations, community based associations, syndicates and various other groups of society have historically been active towards protecting and strengthening freedoms and rights to participation and towards complementing, and in some cases taking-up roles by government agencies in delivering basic social services and undertaking local development activities.

### 1.4.1 EVOLUTION OF CSOs ROLE IN RELATION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

A noteworthy boost to the activity of civil society organizations was witnessed during the Chehabist period (1958-1964) when the state recognized and promoted their role in resolving the social and economic imbalances. At that time, the work of these organizations was influenced by the general socio-political and administrative reforms that were occurring and a shift began to emerge in these organizations' work basis from welfare to social justice, citizen's participation, development and administrative decentralization in favor of rural areas<sup>30</sup>. Rural development thus began to attract interest of prevalent CSOs with emphasis on education and health services provisions.

The war brought about welfare CSOs, most of which *"organized along geo-sectarian communal lines"*<sup>31</sup>. Boosted by the inflow of relief funding, many have built a strong and widespread grass-root

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<sup>28</sup> Many of these projects represent a continuation of the major on-going projects supported by donors and mentioned previously.

<sup>29</sup> The nine preliminary targets of the Plan as listed in its first draft:

- 1) Increase irrigated agricultural land by 5.7percent (from 70,000 ha to 74,000 ha).
- 2) Increase non-irrigated agricultural land by 5.5percent (from 197,000 ha to 208,000 ha).
- 3) Increase cultivated land by 5.5percent (from 267,000 ha in 1997 to 272,000 ha).
- 4) Increase agricultural production value by 15.4percent (from LL 2.1 million in 1996 to US\$ 325 million).
- 5) Increase investment in agriculture and agro-food to around US\$ 600 million.
- 6) Increase exports of agriculture and food products by 45percent (from US\$ 167 million to US\$ 172 milion).
- 7) Decrease import of agriculture and food products (from US\$ 1529 million in 1997 to US\$ 250 million).
- 8) Provide 6,000 job opportunities (permanent and seasonal).
- 9) Increase forest area by 23percent (from 70,000 ha to 86,328 ha).

<sup>30</sup> Karam Karam, 1998, "Les Associations au Liban: Oscillation Entre le Caritatif et le Politique". Unpublished.

<sup>31</sup> "NGOs as Power Brokers in the Rebuilding of a Fragmented State: Post-War Reconstruction in Lebanon", by Roula Majdalani, ACUNS Twelfth Annual Meeting on "Rebuilding Torn Cities" 16-18 June 1999.

presence through dispensation of aid and health services. Certain militias and political parties "carefully and strategically expanded their scope of action through welfare associations"<sup>32</sup>.

The role of civil society organizations and their active role in the post-war era has been reported and described as pioneering: "Civil society organizations in Lebanon are pioneers of remarkable initiatives and activities, particularly in the areas of social services, environment, local and community development, promoting different aspects of peace and development, human rights and human based development through enforcement of international conventions, promoting participation in political life, democracy and parliament-civil society dialogue"<sup>33</sup>. UNDP-Lebanon Development Cooperation Report of 1998 highlighted this role noting that "the remarkable thrust of activity at the upstream level is indicative of the potential role of the different components of civil society in national policy making in the short to medium-term future"<sup>34</sup>.

Indeed, the Lebanese government has been quite responsive to issues raised by civil society. This is demonstrated by the response to the campaign to hold municipal elections that rallied more than 100 CSOs in 1997-1998.

Furthermore, the dialogue about social and economic imbalances translated into close collaboration, even partnership between CSOs and line ministries such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry for the Displaced Persons and other government institutions. CSOs now execute joint projects with ministries partly financed by them and/or deliver specific programs financed by government and donors. They are active in addressing society's needs in the absence of governmental service providers in traditional and new areas (environment). Their role is emerging as parties to which outsourcing of service delivery by government institutions to under-served remote and peripheral villages can be efficiently achieved.

#### 1.4.2 NUMBER & AREAS OF FOCUS

Depending on criteria used, the number of civil society organizations may range from 4,000 to 15,000 as reported in a recent study<sup>35</sup>. Some sources<sup>36</sup> mention that the number of operational CSOs is around 1,600 of which fewer than 50 have a truly national scope and capacity. Other sources<sup>37</sup> estimate that there are around 300 significant CSOs based in Beirut, 50 of which are large and influential with more than ten staff, budgets over US\$ 100,000 and branches and activities throughout the country. The figures of the Ministry of Interior point to a different number of voluntary associations granted "ilm wa khabar"<sup>38</sup>: 3503 associations in 1997 compared to 1586 in 1990.

Few situation analysis and/or statistics on civil society organizations particularly local institutions and their activities were undertaken or compiled. Criteria defining these organizations or classifying them by area, type of activity, size of operation or other criteria are in-existent.

<sup>32</sup> Judith Harik, 1994, "The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias", Center for Lebanese Studies, Oxford, UK.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Resident Coordinator System in Lebanon, Common Country Assessment 1998 (CCA), Part I: CCA Report and Part II: Follow-up on International Conferences, December 1998.

<sup>34</sup> UNDP, Development Cooperation Report 1998, Beirut - Lebanon.

<sup>35</sup> "NGOs as Power Brokers in the Rebuilding of a Fragmented State: Post-War Reconstruction in Lebanon", by Roula Majdalani, ACUNS Twelfth Annual Meeting on "Rebuilding Torn Cities" 16-18 June 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Jon Bennet, 1995, "Lebanon: The Lebanese NGO Forum and the Reconstruction of Civil Society 1989-1993", Earthscan Publications Limited, London, 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 1999, "Civil Society and Governance in Lebanon: A Mapping of Civil Society and its Connection with Governance", unpublished.

<sup>38</sup> According to Article 9 of the 1909 law regulating voluntary work in Lebanon, founding members of voluntary associations have to "inform" the concerned department at the Ministry of Interior prior to starting any operation. The "ilm wa khabar" is a receipt issued by the Ministry of the legal documents submitted (bylaws, justification, objectives and functions, year and place of establishment, names of founding members, and other documents). In principle, associations ought not to wait for a positive reply. In practice though, associations are being requested to seek approval prior to operation.

UNDP in-house database, although not exhaustive, is indicative of the areas of activity currently most common<sup>39</sup>. The database lists one hundred and thirty five active CSOs, ten of which work in agriculture and eleven in rural development (three CSOs list both agriculture and rural development as their sectors of activity). Fifty-four out of the total number of CSOs contained in the database mention community development as a sector of activity. Although they emphasize education and health, these CSOs particularly associate their community development work with credit, income generation and small business development activities. Only twenty-seven out of the total number of CSOs contained in the database are labeled local i.e. working in communities/villages. Nevertheless, no information is available on the extent of activity and target communities.

Given the situation above described and the large discrepancies in data, it appears rather complex to compile and analyze information on the kinds and combinations of local institutions that are supporting agricultural development activities in rural areas of Lebanon, let alone review their role, actions, and geographical outreach.

Information available do however indicate that the shift from war to peace and the consequent drastic reduction in funding engendered a shift in CSOs agenda towards development issues, their activities towards training, income generating projects, small scale credit schemes, etc., and their mode of intervention towards community participation, advocacy, lobbying and awareness raising.

Another characteristic of the post-war is the proliferation of environmental associations<sup>40</sup> and "functionally specialized networks (Lebanese Environment Forum, Lebanese Women's Council, etc.) generated by donors support for capacity building and networking"<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> List dated August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999. The list is neither exhaustive nor selective. It is the result of an informal compilation.

<sup>40</sup> Twenty-two environment and heritage conservation associations in pre-war period compared to seventy-four in 1997: 28 in Beirut, 18 in Mount Lebanon, 11 in Northern Lebanon, 9 in the South and 7 in the Bekaa (Misk, 1998 in "NGOs as Power-Brokers in the Rebuilding of a Fragmented State", by Roula Majdalani, 1999).

<sup>41</sup> "NGOs as Power Brokers in the Rebuilding of a Fragmented State: Post-war Reconstruction in Lebanon", by Roula Majdalani, ACUNS Twelfth Annual Meeting on "Rebuilding Torn Cities" 16-18 June 1999.

Available information also point to interesting developments lead by CSOs in the past few years in rural community development:

The first concerns the establishment and successful operation of micro-credit programmes in under-served areas such as Akkar and Baalbeck areas (refer to box on the right) under a group lending approach serving poor women in rural communities and involving village banks, with community members in a leading role. The small-scale credit operations (loans from US\$ 2,000 up to US\$ 10,000) showed to be particularly impactful in these under-served areas in dire need of resources. It was also demonstrated that providing women with access to credit had an immediate effect on improving children health, nutrition and school enrollment.

The injection of capital for economic activation of small-scale initiatives and enterprises has indeed demonstrated that such activities are at the basis of successful regional development programmes.

The second type of interventions concern basic utilities and economic infrastructure projects carried out in partnership with local community and through cost sharing mechanisms (NGO/Community). These involve rehabilitation of water networks, waste water treatment, market places, etc (refer to box down).

#### Al-Majmoua

Al-Majmoua, an independent Lebanese not for profit association supported by international NGOs and donors, has developed a leading product: small loans for working capital addressed to poor Lebanese who are excluded from access to the banking sector in particular women micro-entrepreneurs.

Working capital loans of short maturity start at USD 250 and increase progressively depending on the needs and reliability of the client. The maximum size of the loan is dependent on the capacity of the business, and may reach thousands of dollars. Al Majmoua does not require collateral to obtain a loan. It relies on clients guaranteeing one another according to the group solidarity principal.

Neighbors and friends choose one another to form a group. This group is composed of between 8-15 women who know one another and are not from the same direct family. Each group member has her own business, and gets her own loan. All group members are mutually responsible for each other's loan. Group members help one another by sending clients to each other and by sharing business tips. A savings service is offered in conjunction with a leading Lebanese bank. The step-by-step lending structure and saving component allow clients to plan for the growth of their businesses.

A project to install potable water pipes and sewers in Hermel and Akkar has been launched to put an end to the practice of storing rainwater for drinking and collecting wastewater in pits.

The project, the first of its kind in underdeveloped villages, will bring drinking water to more than 10,000 citizens in 27 villages in the districts.

Financed by the US agency for international development and implemented by the US Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), the project is the first stage of a six-part plan to develop underprivileged areas in Lebanon.

In the first stage, a primary system of potable water pipes will be installed at a cost of \$160,000. Estimates for the five later stages are still unavailable.

"The project for Hermel and Akkar, which is due to be completed in 2002, includes building wastewater refineries in Halba and Wadi Khaled, both in Akkar, and in Qasr, Hermel," CHF director Ayman Abdullah told The Daily Star.

"CHF will also rehabilitate Baalbek's old marketplace and slaughterhouse in coordination with the ministries of water and electricity resources and social affairs, the Council for Development and Reconstruction and the UN's rural development programme," he added.

"Local committees in the villages will help us decide what each village needs because we believe that the people have a right to share responsibility," Abdullah said.

"We plan to give soft loans, with the help of the Jammal Trust Bank, to local residents to help them build bathrooms in their homes," he added.

The Daily Star, Sep.9, 1998

## **1.5 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE CHALLENGE**

### **1.5.1 WHY LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY?**

After years of involvement in relief work and occasional needs arising in response to recurring Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon, Bekaa and even Beirut (August 1993, April 1996, June 1999), many NGOs and community based associations still face the challenge of adapting to participatory and community based development.

Local community development is a complex, composite concept where several dimensions converge to reflect the manner in which priorities in economic production, education, health and other areas interplay and influence the management of a community's economic and social resources.

Many stakeholders have been active in regional development activities and targeting under-served rural communities: local and international NGOs as well as agencies of the United Nations. Many have initiated community development projects in the different areas and worked closely with community based associations with the objective to raise the living standards of target populations.

Nevertheless, many of these projects were criticized for having been developed without the full and equal participation of concerned groups. Moreover, in the absence of an overall government policy for balanced regional development and sectoral strategies specifically agriculture, and given the ill capacity of local administrations, these initiatives are feared to remain islands of objectives, ostensibly rooted, unable to make pieces of a any visioned puzzle.

Building the institutional capacity of rural community associations is thus an important aspect of rural development owing to the pressure on local groups to play a greater role in community development activities, to increased interest by donors, international and local NGOs in working with community groups, to the rise of participatory fashions, and to various concerns raised by funders as to efficient and effective delivery of projects, accountability and transparency.

It is no doubt that local rural community development associations with poor institutional structures and limited skills will find difficulties in being equal partners of other stakeholders, in identifying priorities, planning projects, generating funds and accessing donors funds, successfully implementing projects and sustaining credibility in the eyes of their public and financiers.

Moreover, as they grow in number, competition for limited and decreasing funds available from donors and government is eventually pushing these associations to seek alternative financing for long-term financial sustainability. Nevertheless, financially sustainable income-generating projects, including microcredit programmes, often implemented by these associations as a way to generate funds, necessitate technical, operational and organizational mechanisms that guarantee sustainability, transparency and accountability to all stakeholders.

It is in this context that building the institutional capacity of local groups/community-based associations takes strength – their capacity to effectively participate in defining priorities and setting development objectives within a strategic and long-term vision and therefore implement activities that end up forming pieces of a credible local developmental scheme.

### **1.5.2 IN LEBANON**

International donor agencies and development organizations working in Lebanon have recently come to recognize how crucial "institutional development" is for the overall development success and the productivity of investments in development.

Nevertheless, investments in institutional development remain focused at the national level to the most visible institutions and to the ones that donors deal with. "Local institutions – those closest to the intended beneficiaries and those which shape projects outcomes most specifically - are allocated fewer resources and are treated almost afterthoughts (Uphoff, 1986)".

With the advent of assistance and administrative reform and capacity building, most of investments have focused, to a large extent, on national public institutions and were concentrated at the level of the

central administration. These were not balanced with investments in decentralized institutions at regional and local levels and in civil society organizations operating locally.

Leading the way, capacity building of both individual organizations and groups of organizations, has been subject of increased action by principal NGOs (the Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace, the International Management Training Institute, the national YMCA, etc.). This effort however, has seldom trickled down to the level of community associations let alone rural community based associations.

Indeed, few efforts were carried by the various players to build the institutional capacity of local groups. Activities aimed at building the skills and know-how of local associations' members, management, volunteers, employees, etc. are limited, although evidences long ago showed that this type of investment is detrimental in improving the overall skill of the community, its capacity to organize, lobby negotiate and be a full fledged partner in identifying needs, setting priorities and seeking projects that would help shape its life.

Funds allocated by local and international NGOs and by UN agencies are mostly directed to operational activities. Few are allocated to building local community associations capacity to devise approaches, arrangements and mechanisms that would enable it to act as strong levers on official and public opinion and to engage more actively in rural community service and development activities.

### **1.5.3 THE TWO CASE STUDIES**

The two case studies here below presented concern a local NGO (case study 1) and a community based association (case study 2). The work is conducted with the aim to assess their institutional structures, develop an understanding of the strategic organizational and management problems they face as they build their capacity to become sustainable and to enhance their role in the local community(ies) they serve.

## 2- "CASE STUDY 1: "JEHAD AL-BINÀA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION"

### 2.1 INTRODUCING THE ORGANIZATION

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association is a Lebanese civil society organization (CSO) established in 1988 with the objective to serve the immediate emergency needs of a specific target population referred to as the "Resistance Community" and to provide for development activities that improve the livelihoods of this target population.

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association is an organization with clear and manifested political affiliation. It is one among the many large-scale development and welfare associations established by the Hizbollah political and religious party (refer to box) whose primary objectives are to alleviate hardships caused by the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon, support the work of the resistance, and strengthen the solidarity spirit among population.

These institutions provide services in health (the Health Committee through its dispensaries and hospitals); disability (the Association for the Wounded); education (the Shahed School and other planned schools); as well as general welfare services (the Martyr Association).

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association is mainly active in two fields: engineering and agriculture. It provides also specific services in response to emergency needs such as the supply of potable water, electricity, garbage disposal, etc.

Jehad Al-Binàa has quickly evolved to become one of the most prominent Lebanese civil society organizations operating at the grass-root level. As the analysis will later show, it is by far one of the most organized and equipped organization. Furthermore, it has a large and focused operation.

Although it is independent operationally and administratively from the party's politics, its visions and activities are very much aligned with the primary goal of supporting the resistance.

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association currently operates a main office in Beirut Southern suburb and two branches in Nabatieh (South Lebanon) and Baalbeck (Bekaa area)<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Please refer to annex 1 for detailed addresses.

#### Some Welfare & Development Associations of Hizbollah

The "Health Committee" (اللجنة الصحية), provides primary health care services and preventive care to people in remote areas and areas bordering the Israeli occupation. The committee collaborates with government (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, etc.) and other NGOs (Secours Populaire Libanais, YMCA, etc.) in conducting immunization campaigns (Polio, DPT, etc.), health surveys in public schools & other activities. It mainly target the 65 villages bordering the so-called security zone occupied by Israel where it has assigned a number of focal points, usually women volunteers.

The Committee has recently undergone a survey of population blood groups in these villages for eventual needs arising from Israeli attacks. The Committee also runs a hospital in the South and another in the Bekaa, 21 dispensaries, 9 multipurpose health centers, 13 clinics, 5 mobile dispensaries serving 45 villages in the Bekaa and 25 villages in the South, and has 95 ambulances. It delivers training to volunteers (360 in 1998) and trains rescuers (119 in 1998) who later join the civil defense volunteer groups. The committee provides services to more than 222,000 persons and operates with an annual budget of around US\$ 2 million.

The "Martyr Association" (مؤسسة الشهداء) has for objective the support of martyrs and detainees families of civilians as well as resistance fighters. For this purpose, it provides children of those families with education (around 1,400 child; 119 of them in universities or vocational education) organizes scouts, sports and leisure activities, provides housing, work opportunities and support to widowed women, runs an employment office for youth, etc.). The association motto is solidarity building among people and the resistance fighters. Its activities are funded based on this same principle whereby individual donors agree to take full charge of beneficiaries (around US\$ 2,500 per month) in addition to funds accrued from Islamic duties paid by believers and contributions by the Iranian Martyrs Association.

The "Association for the Wounded" (مؤسسة الجرحى), was established in 1990 by the "Martyr Association", to serve the needs of wounded and disabled by Israeli attacks: civilians and resistance fighters (8 percent of beneficiaries). The association provides beneficiaries with moral and financial support including monthly payments, housing, health services, education, counseling and support groups using reintegration approaches that aim at serving the beneficiary inside his family and providing him with opportunities for education, income generation and self-support. The association serves around 3,000 beneficiary, counts 40 staff and operates offices in Nabatieh, Tyr and Baalbeck, and runs physiotherapy and a rehabilitation center. The association collaborated with the Norwegian People Aid and Balamand University to survey the number land mines victims, survey of risk areas, and preparation of awareness and information campaigns.

The "Hospital of the Great Prophe" (مستشفى الرسول الأعظم) was established in the congested southern suburb of Beirut (around 750,000 people). It has now a capacity of 130-200 bed, 100 medical doctors of various disciplines, serves around 200,000 people, and runs a nursing school (200-250 paramedical staff per year). The hospital provides cost free services to families of Martyrs and detainees.

The "Shahed School" is a primary school hosting 180 children of martyrs and detainees and around 500 other children. The school runs at cost (US\$ 1000 per year tuition fee for children), delivers the Lebanese national education program in addition to religious learning and is equipped with latest facilities including computer labs.

It employs around one hundred staff, all men, and operates with an annual budget of US\$ 5 million.

## 2.2 A SPECIAL CHARACTER

### 2.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

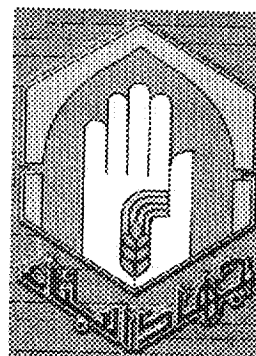
In their publication entitled "*The Generous Hand: Six years of Work and Construction 1988-1994*" dated March 1994, Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association subtly summarized its "raison d'être", character, objective and beneficiaries in a brief statement:

"Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association is an Islamic development and service based association, established in 1988, in Lebanon, following the directives of Ayatullah Khomeyni, to alleviate the hardships that our disadvantaged population and deprived families face, drawing on the support of Allah in carrying out moral and Islamic duties."

### 2.2.2 LOGO

The logo of the association remarkably reflects its identity and "raison d'être": The green based color scheme refers to Islam. The four elements of the logo reflect the association character and activities.

The first element, the hexagon, symbolizes organization and perseverance. The hexagon contains the second element, the arcade, symbol of Islamic architecture also referring to construction (activity number **one** of the association). The hand contained in the arcade holds a wheat ear containing seven seeds (referring to agriculture, activity number **two** of the association). The hand symbolizes work and harvest, force and collaboration. The spike symbolizes growth and productivity. The seven wheat seeds recall the Coranic tale of Prophet Joseph.



## 2.3 ACTIVITIES

The table below summarizes the evolution in the focus and activity areas of the association over the years as presented in its bylaws and subsequent publications.

As per establishment bylaw 1239A/D dated Sep. 1988	As per publication dated March 1994	As per publication dated 1996
Undertake reconstruction and humanitarian projects, of various nature, that help improve people welfare.	Undertake reconstruction and development projects, of various nature, that help improve people welfare (schools, mosques, dispensaries, damage reparation caused by Israeli aggressions).	Constructing humanitarian projects to raise the social level of people.
Encourage and support the drilling of wells, building of water reservoirs, installation and rehabilitation of potable water networks, irrigation and wastewater infrastructure.	Drilling and equipping artisanal wells, building water reservoirs, installation and rehabilitation of potable water networks, irrigation and wastewater infrastructure.	Setting-up hospitals, dispensaries and public clinics to offer treatments and remedies for poor and needy people.
Undertake various environment conservation activities (public gardens, street tree planting, landscaping, pesticides administration, etc.).	Installation of electricity networks and building power stations in remote villages.	Helping the war and natural disasters refugees to return home.
Assist farmers in land reclamation, planting, reforestation and farming their lands, in setting up nurseries and provision of training and extension services.	Assist farmers in land reclamation and cultivation.	Instructing farmers and facilitating land cultivation.
	Promote agricultural awareness through training and extension services.	Saving and protecting environmental conditions, establishing and rehabilitating gardens.
Establish and acquire plants and industrial set-ups of various nature to help achieve the overall objectives of the association.	Establish research centers and undertake studies of various nature to support the development work.	Installing electrical, drinkable water, irrigation and sewage networks.
		Establishing research and studies centers for different development purposes.
		Developing the rural sector and rural women.
		Encourage donors to engage into charitable activities.
Establish research centers and undertake studies of various nature to support the objectives of the association.		



The main services provided by the association to its beneficiaries can be classified in two categories:

### 2.3.1 ENGINEERING:

- Engineering design (architecture, civil, electro-mechanical, quantities and specifications);
- Construction/re-construction: houses, roads, buildings of various nature (schools, hospitals, mosques, dispensaries, shelters, etc.);
- Damage reparation caused by recurrent Israeli bombing, shelling and attacks including August 1993 seven days attacks (5335 houses were rehabilitated), April 1996 and June 1999 attacks;
- Installation of electricity, irrigation and waste water infrastructure, building power stations in remote villages, installation and rehabilitation of potable water networks, building water reservoirs, drilling and equipping artisanal wells, etc.

Annex 4 contains an account of the association closed and on going projects for the period 1988-1996 and planned future projects (year 2000). The list is neither exhaustive nor complete in terms of details concerning the number of beneficiaries or projects budget. The information however, is sufficiently indicative of the size of operations and impact.

### 2.3.2 AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:

- Operating an "Agricultural Inputs and Services Company" that sells agricultural inputs at lower than market prices (30-35 percent) and delivers extension services to farmers.
- Operating eight inputs selling points (inputs cooperatives) (5 in the Bekaa and 3 in the South).
- Operating two veterinary clinics in the southern villages of Sohmar and Toul.
- Administering credit to farmers of the Bekaa. Credit operations target farmers in 190 villages with size of holdings ranging between 15 to 20 dunums. Credit is mostly in kind with no interest and a ceiling equivalent to US\$ 3,000. Credit is complemented with technical assistance and loans followed-up by Jihad Al-Binàa field engineers. This operation is near completing its second year. Jihad Al-Binàa is currently undertaking an evaluation and impact assessment of this operation. A report is expected by end of 1999 following which the second phase of the credit operation would be planned and launched (expected budget US\$ 3 million).
- Delivering specialized training in apiculture (starting 1991, more than 45 courses in bee-keeping to more than 500 farmers) and pisciculture (river fish culture), assisted by Iranian experts with extensive experience in the field of honey production and processing, and in river fish culture.
- Operating two extension centers in Douris and Hermel villages, in the Bekaa, the first targeting around 190 villages of central Bekaa and including demonstration plots, greenhouses, a prototype dairy farm, a pathology and soil testing labs (project cost approximates US\$ 2 million). The second center, services the Hermel region (around 75,000 inhabitants) and includes demonstration plots (trial plots for fruit varieties) and greenhouses.
- Promoting agricultural cooperatives. Sixteen cooperatives were established: one for pickles production, one for honeybee keepers, a service cooperative (machinery), and thirteen agricultural cooperatives, six of them established in the period 1998-1999. This activity is facing various constraints and Jihad Al-Binàa is yet to determine if this activity is worth investing time, efforts and resources in.
- Operating farmer's solidarity funds. To compensate for the non-inclusion of farmers in the National Social Security Fund, Jihad Al-Binàa established farmers' health solidarity funds. At present two funds are operational: one in the south area with 3,344 family members (nearly 20,000 beneficiary) in 113 villages in eight cazaas. The second fund groups 700 family members from the Bekaa. Membership fee was set at LL 10,000. The fund is now valued at LL 162 million. The fund covers the balance of hospitalization costs that are not covered by the Ministry of Health. Contracts with hospitals (16 in the South) are thus managed (cuts of 30-50 percent on balance were obtained in some cases) and a network of 120 contracted doctors (also in the south) provides consultation at reduced costs (cut in fees up to 60 percent).

Agricultural and rural development activities were started in 1987 in the Bekaa area and in 1994 in south Lebanon. The agricultural department now counts sixteen agricultural engineers, two veterinary doctors and other staff.

Jehad Al-Binàa, works very closely with farmers communities and attempts to support agriculture production by providing farmers with credit facilities, extension services and access to inputs at cost thus allowing farmers to reduce their costs of production and raise their competitiveness.

In the Bekaa area, Jehad Al-Binàa is working at easing the marketing problems of agricultural products by developing the processing sector. It has established a tomato processing and canning industry that is processing 100 tons of locally produced tomatoes per day. This is yet at experiment stage.

Jehad Al-Binàa also provides technical assistance to farmers in land reclamation and cultivation, opening agricultural roads and installing irrigation networks. It operates its own nurseries (three) for forest and fruit trees production and annually conducts reforestation campaigns (more than 50,000 trees). It also tries to promote agriculture through organizing agricultural exhibitions and donating machineries to be operated collectively by farmers (donated more than 30 tractors to a selected number of villages' cooperatives).

## 2.4 MEMBERSHIP AND BENEFICIARIES

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association does not provide services to its own members (the 15 volunteers composing the General Committee) but to a specific target population defined by Jehad Al-Binàa as the "Resistance Community". This community includes population living in areas South of the Litany river, villages of West Bekaa bordering the Israeli defined security zone as well as the disadvantaged groups in Beirut Southern suburbs, which are heavily populated by emigrants from the aforementioned areas and remote rural villages. These communities are believed to constitute the social and demographic backstopping to the Islamic resistance fighting against the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and are therefore referred to as the "Resistance Community".

Membership in Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association is restricted. The General Committee and staffing is constricted to people of a specific political/religious affiliation.

## 2.5 ORGANIZATIONAL SET-UP AND EVOLUTION

### 2.5.1 MODEL OF ORGANIZATION

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association is run by a General Committee ("Haiaa Aamma"), composed of 15 volunteers (non-paid), all men, who oversee the general objectives and performance of the association. The association is managed by a Director General, elected<sup>43</sup> for the position from among members of the General Committee, and the managing board composed of the heads of committees (now departments).

The association evolved over the years and currently employs around one hundred staff, all men, twenty five of which work in agricultural and rural development. Around thirty-five employees are engineers and fifteen hold a university degree. In emergency circumstances, the number of employees increases to reach, in some cases, 3,000 employees, volunteers and workers (damage repairs).

#### 2.5.1.1 Organizational Structure and Evolution

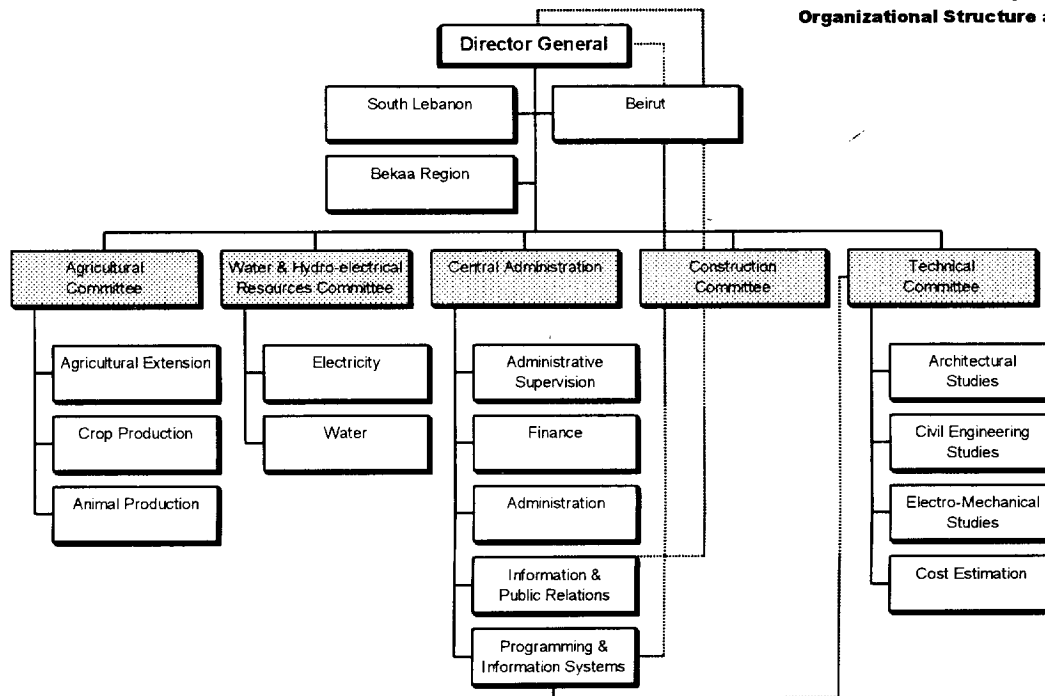
The figures here below describe the previous (March 1994) and current organizational structures of the association and thus illustrates its marked evolution.

In 1994, the association's work was organized along four main thematic committees (agriculture, water and hydro-electrical resources, construction and technical) and three geographic regions (Beirut, South, Bekaa), with a large supporting central administration.

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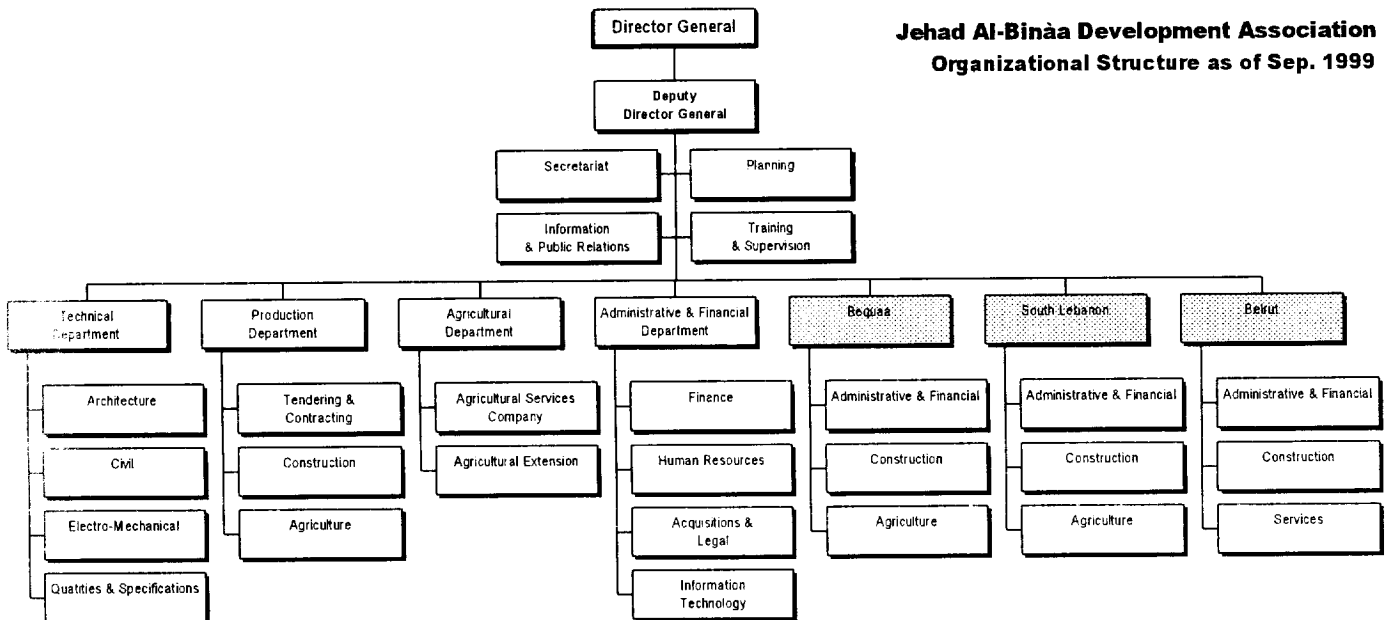
<sup>43</sup> Elections to the Director General post take place every two years.

**Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association  
Organizational Structure as of March 1994**



In 1999, the association expanded its operations and undertook a restructuring of its organizational set-up towards a flatter functional hierarchy.

**Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association  
Organizational Structure as of Sep. 1999**



The agricultural committee, which used to be composed of three sections dealing with extension, crop production and animal production was restructured into two main sections: the first dealing with agricultural extension (including all sectors of production, cooperatives setting, training, etc.), and the second, the services section, mainly in charge of operating a company "Fousoul" trading agricultural inputs.

The water and hydro-electrical resources committee, the construction committee and the technical committee were also restructured. Two departments emerged: the technical department in charge of engineering design work (including architecture, civil, electro-mechanical, quantities and specifications) and the production department, mainly in charge of contracting works and management of income generating projects. The department is denominated production in reference to its main function i.e. financing the overheads, emergency, services and development activities of the association.

The administration was also restructured. The planning, information and public relations as well as training and monitoring functions were delegated to the Director General Office while the new administration took charge of administrative and financial issues. The Director General Office thus became the planning/supervisory body of the association. It is now staffed with five specialists including a Deputy Director General directly in charge of following-up and supervising the delivery of the annual workplan and monitoring the annual budget.

The regional committees, which used to liaise directly with the Director General, became regional departments with decentralized administrative and financial functions. They are not stand alone departments though, but rather cut across the organization's hierarchy as members of the regional departments are themselves members of the specialized departments i.e. agriculture or production. Operationally, work is decentralized and followed by the regional departments' heads while planning and technical backstopping is carried out in close collaboration with the central specialized department. Reporting flows along the same organizational lines (refer to section 4.5.2).

Each department has a clear terms of reference spelled out in the association's publications.

#### 2.5.1.2 Participatory Management

Although the work at Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association seems to revolve around one person: the Director General, his role is of a guiding, supervisory nature rather than an autocratic leader. In agriculture and rural development, the service orientation, grass-root approach, consultative planning procedure and group evaluation involves nearly every single member of the department in planning and decision making; a procedure called "Shoura" in the association's terminology.

Although the Director General enjoys a central power and decision making as it concerns implementing workplans, service delivery and quality control, short-term decisions as well as longer-term plans are built on this participatory and consensus basis.

#### 2.5.1.3 Leadership:

Looking at leadership from three angles: the technical, human and conceptual skills of the supervisors, the organization seems to be remarkably organized. Leaders have the knowledge and ability based on experience, and educational attainment. They are quite aware of management techniques and processes. Their ability to build teamwork is obvious. They are the moral and technical reference of the group.

As for the conceptual skills, i.e. ability to think in terms of models, frameworks, long-range plans or strategies, the leaders and supervisors have developed a consultative forum where this strategic thinking is exercised on a regular basis.

#### 2.5.1.4 Planning & Decision Making

Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association has established a discipline practiced yearly (refer to section 4.5.4.3) consisting of an assessment exercise of the association's work and impact. The exercise starts with a critical review of the year's activities and expenditures. The review takes place during a four days retreat in December of every year. During the retreat all aspects of service delivery, organization, coordination, management, technical issues, etc. are discussed and evaluated. All staff of the association are involved. The assessment and large base discussions to which all staff participate result in a workplan and budget for the year to come spelling out the various projects, benchmarks and deliverables, with time bound targets, responsibilities, and cost estimates.

The heads of departments have full responsibility for the implementation of the projects assigned to them and related decision making. The Director General has the ultimate responsibility to monitor and follow-up on the workplan, to intervene in decision making as needed to ensure timely delivery, and to report, on regular basis, on the plan's implementation to the General Committee or "*Hajia Aamma*".

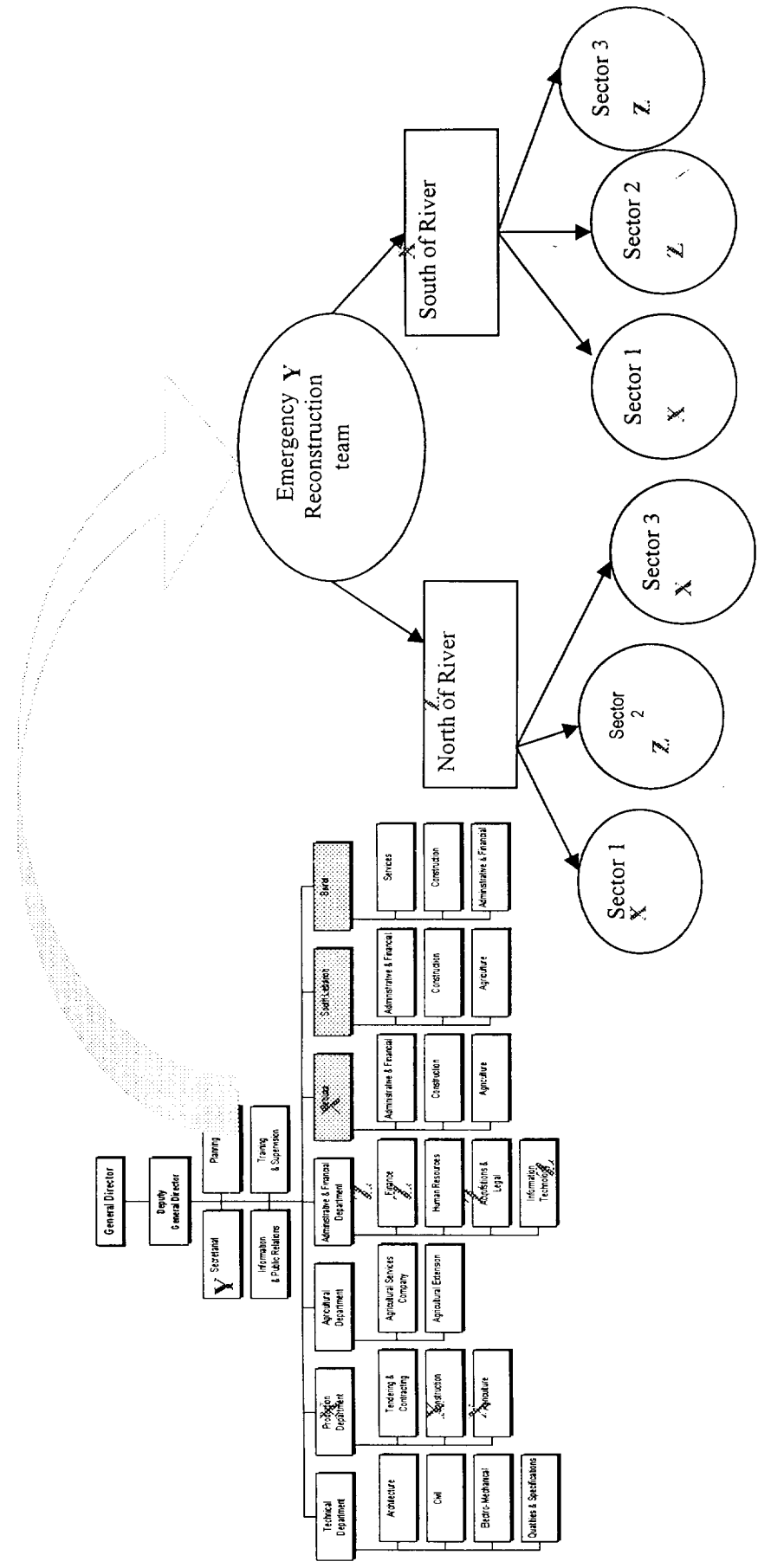
### **2.5.2 DIVISION OF WORK**

Work is divided into clear levels of authority and responsibility and into functions i.e. kind of duties within each level. In agriculture and rural development however, and despite the seemingly hierarchical set-up, field operation is extremely flexible and based on teamwork organized by the supervisors (second-level managers).

In general, people and resources are assigned to specific jobs requiring defined levels of specialization based on the yearly workplan. Assignment of duty, authority and responsibility are thus quite clear. The flow of work referring to who initiates an activity and who receives it does not suffer from the usual ambiguity as it is clearly defined and agreed at the beginning of each year.

#### 2.5.2.1 Matrix division

In emergency circumstances, the division of work follows a matrix organization constructed for the purpose and for a determined duration, whereby specialists from the various departments are drawn out of their normal functions, regrouped along a different organizational set-up, assigned particular responsibilities and required to work along a different hierarchy and authority.



### 2.5.2.2 Incubator

In agriculture and rural development particularly, the work is well delegated among specialists who are assigned areas (geographic) or topics of specialization. Monitoring this delegation is a clear responsibility of the head of department and regional group leaders. As a result, duplication and conflicts seldom occur.

The delegation of responsibilities for agricultural projects is a remarkable one. The department initiates the activity and acts as an incubator for each project providing necessary equipment, tools, staffing and following it closely. The head of the department provides necessary technical and managerial backstopping discussing workplan, budget, activities, etc. with potential leaders/directors of projects and coaches them into their duties. The department also helps each project acquire licences and legal status, and in due time develops its own identity and management.

The department continues to follow-up the projects thus ensuring access to know-how through training and field visits of engineers, seeks to solve problems and provide venues for marketing products and capacity building.

### **2.5.3 NATURE OF JOBS**

Roles are quite defined within the association. Although there are no formal job description, employees obtain clear information regarding their work-related roles through orientation sessions and coaching. Employees have clear and definite understanding of their own roles, that of their peers, as well as clear perceptions about their supervisors and managers roles. This is one determinant of the observed employees' satisfaction with their jobs, their organizational commitment and therefore their productivity.

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association has a clear salary and benefit policy<sup>44</sup> installing a standard of fairness of rewards that seems to be accepted by employees. Although salaries are admittedly lower than market rates, emphasizing the ideological/commitment nature of work in the association, a sense of equity is prevalent. Employees perceive the fairness of rewards received in terms of a package of psychological, social and economic rewards. Problems of double standards, over-rewarding and under-rewarding causing drops in quantity and quality of work and levels of employees' satisfaction are not prevalent.

Job stress usually arising from poor quality of supervision (autocratic or unclear), from inadequate authority matching an employee's role or from role conflicts and ambiguity are seldom.

### **2.5.4 COMMUNICATION**

The number of employees at Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association is large (around 100 employees) compared to Lebanese scales. Chains of commands are however short and communication whether downward (management to employees) or upward (employees to management) is strong by virtue of the regular meetings and strong group interaction.

Cross communication is also quite strong as the specialized departments correspond continuously with the regional departments ensuring coordination, flow of information, monitoring and evaluation.

#### 2.5.4.1 Meetings

General meetings are held on weekly, monthly, biannual and annual basis to review progress and revise workplans, exchange information, advice, coordination and decision-making.

Heads of departments convene weekly with the Director General and with their staff. Heads of the three regions convene field engineers working in the region to monthly meetings to discuss development and priorities arising in the region.

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<sup>44</sup> Allowances include educational allowances, health insurance plus credit facilities.

Heads of departments and the Director General also meet on monthly basis. The agenda of the meeting is prepared by the Director General office based on monthly reports submitted by the department heads. The duration of the meetings is variable as per the agenda and issues to discuss.

#### 2.5.4.2 Reports

Written communication is also strong. The association has established a culture of written communication that is practiced by all staff at all levels. Each staff fills in a weekly report sheet that he submits to his direct supervisors (geographical area supervisor and specialized department head). Departments submit to the Director General weekly progress reports. The Director General, based on his examination of the reports prepares agenda for brief weekly and monthly meetings where issues are clarified, followed-up and resolved.

Monthly reports are prepared and submitted to the Director General forming the basis for his report to the General Committee and the agenda for the monthly progress review.

A bi-annual activity report is prepared as well as an annual report that are shared and discussed.

#### 2.5.4.3 Yearly retreat

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association has established a discipline practiced yearly consisting of a critical review of the year's activities and expenditures during a four days retreat in December of every year. During the retreat all aspects of service delivery, organization, coordination, management, technical issues, etc. are discussed and evaluated. The large base discussions to which all employees participate result in a workplan and budget for the year to come.

### **2.5.5 TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING**

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association devotes adequate consideration to capacity building and skill development. As per the affirmation of the agriculture department head, an employee gets at least one training course per year.

Towards this end, the association has contracted a private company "Team International" to undertake on the job training for its technical staff in the various fields of operation (engineering, AutoCAD drawing, computer training, etc.) and management. It also attempts to build linkages with bilateral donors and has benefited in this respects from training programs financed by the Italo-Lebanese bilateral cooperation in the area of agricultural development. Pending availability of funds, the association also sends its engineers for specialized training over seas in Iran and other countries.

Besides training courses, it is the policy of the association to encourage staff to attend and actively participate to all events, workshops, seminars, etc., organized in Lebanon by the various NGOs, Syndicates, Universities, UN-agencies, etc.

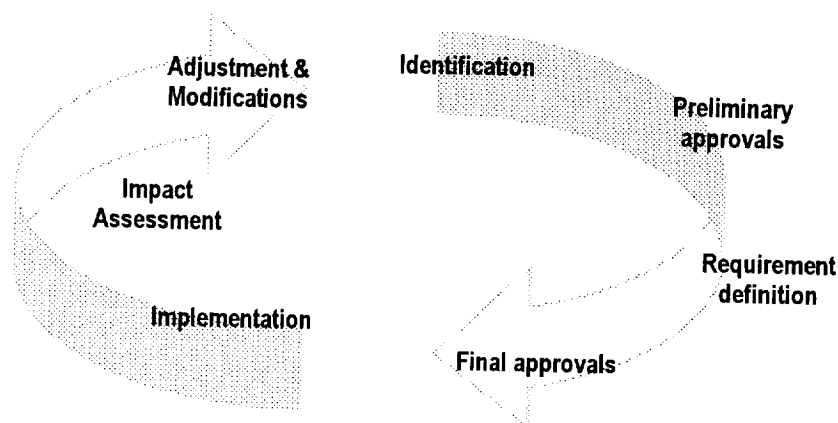
As for computer literacy and information management, most staffs are computer literate. Information technology is one main function undertaken within the administrative & financial department.

## **2.6 APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY / ACTIVITIES**

### **2.6.1 PROJECT LIFE CYCLE APPROACH**

Except for emergencies, engineering design, construction/re-construction and infrastructure, projects undertaken by the association are identified and implemented as per the annual workplan or upon commissioning.

Projects in agriculture are not identified using the traditional participatory approaches (Rapid Participatory Appraisal techniques or others). Target groups are not actively involved in the definition of needs and prioritization of projects/activities. The association has a pre-defined plan. Priorities are defined by the field engineers of the association themselves, on the basis of needs they perceive during their field visits and upon interaction with population especially farmers. The project cycle typically begins with identification of needs, field engineers convene, discuss needs and suggest priorities to leaders. If approved, the project proceeds as per the illustration: identification, preliminary approvals, definition of requirements, final approvals, implementation, impact assessment.



It is here worth noting that the association attempts, to the extent possible and as judged appropriate, to seek cost sharing from beneficiary groups. This practice is encouraged as experience demonstrated that more ownership by local community is insured and success guaranteed.

### 2.6.2 INFORMATION BASE, RECORD KEEPING AND ARCHIVING

Assessments, survey and data collection are undertaken on need basis by staff in their assigned geographic or thematic area. As need arises, the staff may rely on a central database hosted and maintained by Hizbollah central office.

No electronic archiving of information available or organization into databases have taken place yet. The head of the agriculture department recognizes the need for such systematic work especially where it concerns credit operations and the farmer's solidarity fund. This constitute one of the activities that the department is considering for the coming years through the establishment of farmers ID.

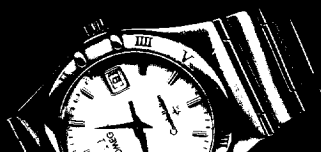
In terms of information systems, the association is equipped with PCs, needed software (MS office, accounting systems, payroll, etc.) and local area networks. Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association is planning to automate most of its activities.

### 2.6.3 ADVOCACY/INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

According to Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association, advocacy is an important activity complementing the work of the association and promoting its services and messages. According to the association Director General, the dear costs of advocacy and communication activities prohibit the extensive usage of media and the setting and implementation of information/communication/advocacy campaigns.

At present, information is limited to coverages and reportages by Al-Manar - a TV station run by Hizbollah and to radio broadcast programs. Annual or biannual publications are produced summarizing activities of Jihad Al-Binàa. Other activities are carried on need/occasions basis such as organizing competitions for best designs, exhibitions or others.

However, despite this fact and that no comprehensive communication/advocacy strategy has been spelled out that the association may implement (with detailed workplan and budget), the logo and messages of the association are systematically displayed in an obvious manner in all areas, on all projects carried out and all machinery and installations. Workers wear the logo during action. Furthermore, all constructions have





a clear architectural identity and colors (green, yellow and white, following the colors of the association's logo (refer to section 4.2.2).

The agricultural extension section uses pamphlets and brochures extensively to communicate information to farmers. Booklets are produced for best practices to follow. Pamphlets for the newly established extension centers are produced and disseminated – activities that emphasize a deep-rooted awareness of the importance and impact of advocacy and communication.

## **2.7 NETWORKING AND LINKAGES**

Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association is aware of the importance of linkages and networking. Close ties are being developed with central government administration namely line ministries concerned with the activities of the association such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Hydraulics and Electrical Resources, the Ministry of Environment, Water Authorities, the High Relief Committee, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and others. At local levels strong ties are built with municipalities especially where members of Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association are members as well of their municipal councils.

Linkages with farmers' communities are very tight and members of the association work out social and professional linkages in an informal setting through visits and involvement in farmer's social and productive life.

The association is selective concerning linkages with other CSOs. It collaborates primarily with organizations active in the agricultural sector and in vocational training such as YMCA. The association also keeps close ties with universities including the Lebanese University and the American University of Beirut - many of its staff being graduates of these universities.

The association attempts to keep close contacts with all stakeholders including syndicates of engineers and private sector associations, and contributes to all events and conferences. Meetings are nevertheless closed to outside participants.

The association is trying to build linkages with agricultural research centers such as the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the national Agricultural Research Institute. It is also seeking co-financing from donors, particularly UN agencies (UNDP, LIFE project, etc.) and government institutions. It has recently implemented a honey-bee production project in South Lebanon co-financed with UNDP (seed money) and built a successful endeavor that is now a best practice often visited by donors and advocated.

Nevertheless, and according to Jehad Al-Binàa management, the political and religious nature of the organization has put-off donors and other organizations. This is despite the fact that donors, specifically UN agencies with which Jehad Al-Binàa has had the chance to work to implement pilot development projects were much impressed with the result orientation of the association and the quality of work delivered.

## **2.8 CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The association management and staff seem to agree that the challenges faced, excluding the politico-religious image of the association, can be grouped in three categories pertaining to the technical competitiveness, project management skills, and financial sustainability of the association.

Keeping technically competitive is a challenge that the association is aware of. Management and staff all identified the need for continuous on-the job training especially in agriculture. According to Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association, building technical know-how and keeping updated technically through continuous training and exposure to modern techniques and approaches is an area where assistance is most crucial to ensure sound planning and delivery of quality services.

Management and staff also identified the need for focused training on project identification and management techniques including needs survey (techniques, sampling, or participatory approaches, etc.) to feasibility studies, project planning, budgeting, monitoring and follow-up.

Another area of capacity building highlighted is information management and information technology.

Despite on-going efforts, a human resources development plan is yet to be devised by Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association. Implementation of such a plan may be constrained by funds availability due to pressing needs. Nevertheless investment in this component of institutional capacity building is crucial at this point in time as the agricultural section is expanding its services and activities especially in agricultural credit and in extension – areas requiring specific skills.

Recruitment of highly qualified staff is one related challenge, also linked to financial constraints - salaries being not market competitive. It is also constrained by the fact that recruitment is limited to candidates of a specific politico-religious affiliation.

Financially, Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association strives to become a self-sustained institution. The association operates with an annual budget of US\$ 5 million 40 percent of which cover salaries and overheads.

At present, the association funds are drawn from:

- (1) Contributions by the Islamic Republic of Iran,
- (2) Contributions by various welfare associations and parties,
- (3) Contributions by Individuals,
- (4) Islamic rights donated by believers in and outside Lebanon,
- (5) Profits from the Agricultural Inputs Company,
- (6) Fees from contracting works,
- (7) Consultation fees (Engineering design, training, etc.),
- (8) Cost sharing with beneficiaries, UN-agencies, partner NGOs, etc.

The association has been able, in the last few years, to diversify its sources of funding and is slowly approaching self-sustainability. The establishment of the production department is one step in this direction.

## **2.9 FINAL REMARKS: A SPECIAL INSTITUTION**

In carrying out its work, Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association follows five declared principles – the first two marking it with a special character:

1. Promoting the message of Islam.
2. Building resistance of people in areas subject to Israeli occupation and aggressions.
3. Partnership with serviced population (cash or kind contribution).
4. Promoting self-reliance and sustainability of activities.
5. Quality interventions and standards of performance in planing and execution.

The above stated and practiced principles, as well as elements provided by the preceding analysis imply that Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association does not fit any of the categories of rural community development associations as described by Upholf (refer to Annex 1) but rather enjoys a special character and way of work dictated by the following:

- Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association does not provide services to its members but to a specific target population defined by Jihad Al-Binàa as the "resistance community", spread over three main geographical zones, two of them considered rural (South & Bekaa) and the third an urban suburb.
- The activities of the association follow the vision and complement the work of other Hizbollah social and development institutions which aim at servicing disadvantaged groups, building solidarity and strengthening the support to the Islamic resistance fighting against the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.
- The objective of the work is thus highly politicized.
- And the selection of the sectors of work is based on political considerations that serve the overall objectives. The main activities of the association are construction/reconstruction and infrastructure. Agricultural and rural development activities were initiated for the main reason that agriculture constitutes the major occupation and way of life of people in target areas and that promoting

agriculture would help improve livelihoods, reduce migration of people from target villages, and subsequently backstops the resistance and the resistance community.

- Although the approach of the association is rather service delivery, it is slowly moving to longer-term development oriented work.
- The association does not refer or think in terms of urban/rural or income driven versus sustainable human development. The language and terminologies used in the association work and publications do not recall any of those found in development literature.
- Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association is not open to outside members. The general committee and staffing is restricted to people of a specific religious and political affiliation.

Throughout years of activities, Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association has build strong ties with its target beneficiaries. It enjoys the respect and trust of people. The quality interventions and standards of performance in planing and execution, the serious and pragmatic approach, and the efficient delivery of quality services have earned the association a reputation of excellence among beneficiaries, donors, UN agencies and the government.

The clear organizational structure of Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association, the prevalent cooperation and communication across structure as well as strong planning, goal-setting and decision-making mechanisms appear to be keys to its efficient and effective operational environment and timely delivery.

The association's leaders and managers have been successful in setting an effective organizational system and in using it in such a way that it became a triple reward system in which human, organizational and technical goals are met.

The political/religious commitment remains an important constituent of this human, organizational and operational success story. This does not intend to belittle neither the professionalism of staff and management nor the soundness of the organizational set-up and operations. They are no doubt examples to follow. Nevertheless the discipline emanating from the strong political/religious commitment environment marks, undoubtedly, the success recipe. Whether this institution would operate as effectively should this politico-religious dimension of its success be missing, is indeed a question that arises.

### 3- "CASE STUDY 2: "ARSAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION"

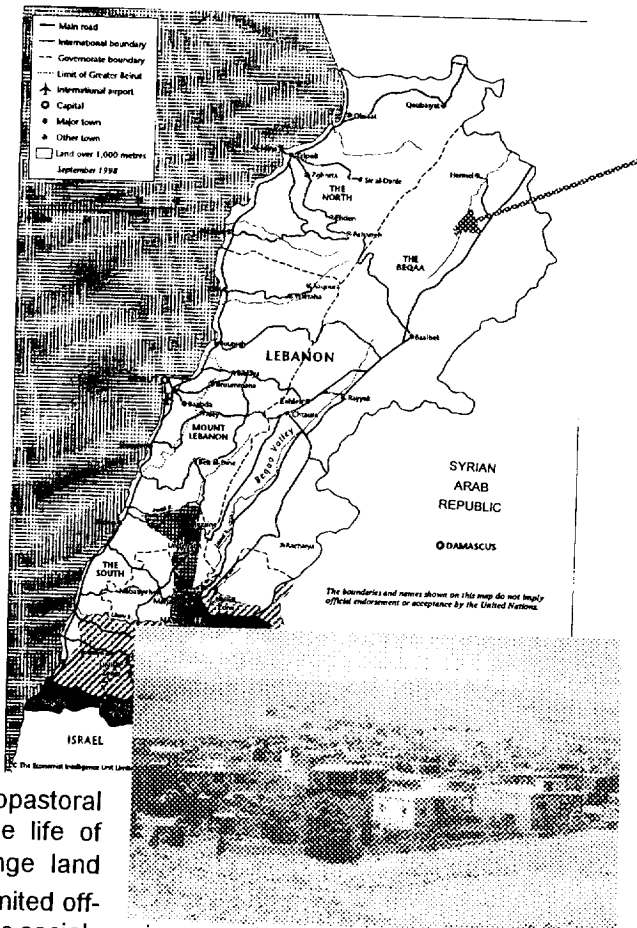
#### 3.1 INTRODUCING THE VILLAGE

Arsal is a large highland village (around 47,000 ha equivalent to 1/22 of the total area of Lebanon).

It is located in the Bekaa area, North of Baalbeck, on the semi-arid western slopes of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, at 1450 m of altitude, in a remote and marginal extreme zone (143 Km from Beirut).

Once a nomadic seasonal settlement, Arsal grew into a large but isolated rural community of around 36,000 inhabitants, two third of whom are, at present, residents of Arsal. According to estimates, 60 percent of the population are below 20 years of age. Population growth is high with around 560 newborn annually<sup>45</sup>.

The village is a self-supporting economic unit with limited natural resources and 450 years of agro-pastoral traditions. During the first half of this century, villages on the marginal slopes of anti-Lebanon mountains survived in a traditional agropastoral economy based on small-scale farming and seasonal migration<sup>46</sup>. In the second half, major cultural and economic changes occurred, triggered by a marked migration to the capital (around 70 percent of Arsal villagers migrated to Beirut southern suburbs) and later by a reverse migration caused by the civil war and Israeli invasions. These shifts, compounded by major decreases in purchasing power, and the shift from the traditional agropastoral subsistence to market economy had drastic impact on the life of Arsalis and their natural resource base<sup>47</sup>, causing range land deterioration and heavy soil erosion. In addition to isolation, limited off-farm alternative income-earning opportunities and lack of basic social services, productive use and therefore the long-term viability of agriculture in Arsal is now at risk<sup>48</sup>.



##### 3.1.1 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Around 70 percent of Arsal population are involved in agriculture with 15 percent of them full time farmers. Water is scarce and most agriculture is limited to the non-irrigated production of cherry and apricots fruits (which are exclusively rain fed), wheat, barley and other cereal production.

Livestock provides subsistence to Arsali families (40,000-50,000 cheep and goats in total) and is a source of raw wool and meat, milk, cheese and manure. About half of Arsal farmers are flock owners with the majority being small holders (up to 20 heads).

The majority of farmers did not complete elementary school education and the average size of their households is eleven members<sup>49</sup>. They face limited economic opportunities due to remote markets and high

<sup>45</sup> Interviews with Mr. Kassem Al-Shab, President, Arsal Rural Development Association.

<sup>46</sup> Hamadeh, S.K., H. Seeden, S.N. Talhouk, R. Baalbaki, and R. Zreik. 1993. Changes in traditional Agropastoral Systems: A Lebanese case Study. International Center for agricultural Research in the Dry Areas. Dryland Management Project Workshop. Aleppo, Syria.

<sup>47</sup> Hamadeh et al, 1993.

<sup>48</sup> Talhouk S.N., R.A. Chahine, S. Hamadeh, B.C. Hamdar, R. Baalbaki, 1996. Low-Input Cherry Production: A Horticultural Alternative in Marginal Highlands as a Case Study from Lebanon. HortScience, Vol. 31(7). Dec.: 1077-1079.

transportation costs for their perishable agricultural products and home-produced crafts and processed food. The village labor force is unskilled in its majority, and works outside the village as seasoned labor or shepherders. Less than 10 percent of the population migrate as seasonal herders or workers<sup>50</sup>. Other economic activities include rock quarrying (1,200 ha) and production of tiles for construction purposes.

In addition to seasonal agricultural activities, carpet weaving and the cottage industry are two important off-farm activities carried by women, emphasizing their role in securing alternative economic revenues. Women, in their majority, are excluded from the labor market.

### 3.1.2 BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

In addition to few private schools, one public primary school and one public intermediary school are overcrowded with children. Only two dispensaries are operational securing primary health care services. The closest hospital is in Baalbeck, more than 60 Km away. Safe drinking water is not readily available to all households and potable water infrastructure is available in only one part of the village. Electricity networks are available but the village suffers from prolonged and repeated power failure. A central telephone network is available but not operational. Roads are rudimentary. Agricultural roads are precarious.

The remote location of Arsal, unreliable transport infrastructure, limited educational opportunities and low income of people are exacerbated by the paucity of government assistance namely for providing basic social services and infrastructure. Furthermore, the isolation resulted in quasi complete reliance on farming systems that require little technical inputs and constrained marketing capacity.

To face-up to the long history of isolation and marginalization, to disadvantaged social and economic conditions, to increasing poverty, rural out migration and environmental degradation, Arsal, "a community fighting for its survival"<sup>51</sup>, instituted a number of self-help group traditions such as the "Mneeha", a network whereby help is extended to shepherds in difficulties, and the "Balleh", whereby villages gather to help build the ceilings of newly constructed cob houses built of mud.

### Agriculture in Transition

Arsal depends for its agricultural activities on its surrounding marginal highlands. Around 30 percent of land is potentially arable, nearly 25 percent is cultivated and the rest left fallow or communal lands.

The average rainfall in the highlands is around 300 mm per year, mostly in the form of snow. The agricultural systems that have been developed to deal with such lands rely mainly on the production of low-intensity and low-productivity agronomic crops that are well adapted to the environment.

Agriculture in the dry highlands of Arsal is undergoing a transition from the traditional agropastoral system to a non-irrigated fruit production system. Fifty years ago, half of the arable Arsali highlands produced grains amounting to 2400t (0.4 tons/ha). Today, the main non-irrigated agronomic crops grown by Arsali farmers consist of wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.), barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.), and chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.). There is now however a sharp decline in cereal production, being replaced upon farmers' own initiative, with fruit tree production, mainly cherries (*Prunus avium* L.) and apricots (*Prunus armeniaca* L.) in percentages approximating 65 percent and 35 percent of total number of fruit trees (around 2 million trees covering 9,000 ha).

The transition from agropastoral to horticultural fruit tree production necessitated changes in cultural practices but due to low levels of skill and widespread poverty, low-input farming is practiced.

While most of Bekaa farmers use machinery (87 percent), tillage operations in Arsal are still powered by animals (93 percent), which are shared between growers. Use of pesticides and fertilizers is quasi non-existent (99percent of farmers do not use such inputs) for various reasons including lack of knowledge and remote location. Problems such as soil nutrient depletion are resulting from the lack of application of organic or non-organic fertilizers. The lack of use of pesticides is causing insects and pest present to multiply. Flat-headed bore (*Capnodis tenebrionis* L.) are causing major tree losses in some orchards, and other pests were identified such as the shot hole borer (*Ruguloscolytus rugulosus* Retz.) and the cherry slug worm (*Caliroa cerasi* Retz.).

### Transportation Problems

Unlike most growers in the Bekaa who use machinery to reach their orchards (80 percent), the majority of Arsal farmers (86 percent) rely on animal transport. The family generally moves into "summer houses" at the orchard site at harvesting time, and participates in the harvest. Roads are in a precarious state.

Transport is a major cost incurred by farmers. Due to remoteness of orchards (30 Km from village) and the village itself from the local market, farmers are completely dependent on middlemen. They are in a weak negotiating position when determining farm gate prices and transportation costs with truckers and middlemen.

Although fruit crops in Arsal are late crops (one month later than peak national production), this potential market advantage is offset by the lack of negotiation power over the price.

Nevertheless, and despite marketing problems, low-input fruit crop production remain more profitable than traditional agronomic crops.

<sup>49</sup> Hamadeh et al, 1993.

<sup>50</sup> Talhouk et al, 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Yadan by Yad, UN Volunteers Newsletter, issue 3, May 1999.

Arsali women also formed mutual help groups providing labor, mobilizing funds and cooperating in events and ceremonies. Women's saving groups or "Jamiyya" are important sources of informal credit requiring regular contributions from women who then take in the use of the collected funds.

The Arsal Rural Development Association, established formally by a small group of pioneering individuals in the last decade of this century, has built on these traditions a longer-term development vision and shaped the community sense of purpose, turning Arsal into an example of good practice in rural community development.

### 3.2 INTRODUCING THE ORGANIZATION

Arsal Rural Development Association<sup>52</sup> was established in 1990 (legal number 5 A/D (علم وخير ٥ ا / د)) as a volunteer-based independent, non-profit, community association with the objective to plan and implement development projects and initiate activities that contribute to improving the livelihoods of the Arsalis.

Towards this end, the association seeks to closely collaborate with programs and projects initiated by the government, CSOs and donors community and to build strong linkages with the various stakeholders.

Arsal Rural Development Association has played a critical role in building awareness of the community to its concerns and potentials, and in channeling the community efforts to common objectives. It has rallied the people of Arsal, empowered and oriented their collaborative effort to lobby for government assistance and donors interest. By creating a forum for interaction, participation and debate among the women and men of Arsal, it was able, during a period of nine years, to organize and manage a plethora of development projects that are undertaken with selected partners. By virtue of its activities and concerns, the headquarter of the association became a landmark of the village.

The rural community of Arsal and Arsal Rural Development Association have been pointed at, on various occasions, and by various groups, as an example of good practice in rural community development.

### 3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

The objectives of the association, as stated in its bylaws are the following:

- Raising awareness of the community to its developmental needs.
- Development of the village human resources base.
- Social development and improvement of people's livelihoods with special emphasis on women.
- Soliciting government interest to deliver services to the village.

### 3.4 ACTIVITIES

The association has planned and implemented a number of activities that constitute elements of a long-term vision for rural community development. These cover a range of areas including health, education, land management, water harvesting, agriculture, as well as human resources development.

At present the activities of the association are organized along four main thematic areas:

- 1) **Building capacity of members** is thought of importance for the sustainable and quality interventions of the association. Activities include seminars on participation, discussions on vision, identity and role of the association, seminars on management principles and practices, seminars on participatory approaches and techniques, discussions on community development work and mechanisms, etc. Recently, a survey of skills and capacity building needs was undertaken.

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<sup>52</sup> The association has one office in Arsal Village, North-East of Baalbeck Tel:08-240275 / 03-358654 - Fax: 01-373118

## 2) Programs and Activities:

a) Agricultural development activities revolve around the follow-up and support to the two cooperatives, the women food processing cooperative and the herdsmen/livestock producers cooperatives, established by the association as part of users subnetworks for sustainable development and management of resources, within the framework of the project "Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands in Lebanon" (please refer to section 5.8).

- The women cooperative for food processing "Mouneh" (الجمعية التعاونية للمونة الريفية - عرسال) is composed of women groups from twenty families. They were trained by specialists from the American University of Beirut (AUB), Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), Nutrition Department, to produce and conserve food without additives or preserving substances. The association provided the cooperative with the physical space where a small processing plant was established, a store and shelves to display their products. The association markets the cooperative's products in return of a percent revenue on sales.
- The herdsmen/livestock producers cooperative (تعاونية التربية الحيوانية - عرسال), which groups around 130 families, is the first livestock cooperative in Lebanon. It works at improving the grazing areas, the health of livestock, and marketing situation of flocks. The work is done in cooperation with IFAD, UNDP and others by giving incentives to farmers (grazing), flock vaccination<sup>53</sup> and training on preventive health programmes.

The association is now seeking to expand the subnetworks for sustainable development. One of the components under preparation is a water harvesting system (rain water-harvesting pond) that would service the community and improve availability of water for irrigation purposes.

In addition, the association regularly organizes agricultural extension workshops and activities including training on beekeeping, on marketing of agricultural products, and other topics of concern. It is also preparing, in collaboration with AUB-FAFS, a natural resources management plan for the village.

b) Vocational training courses are organized by the association on regular basis, aiming at teaching young men and women a certain skill. This training is usually a basic introductory one that would help beneficiaries seek jobs or additional training.

Vocational training and human resources development activities include women focused training including sessions on various health, cultural and economic issues, training on computer tools for youth, training on various construction related skills, etc.

The association also dedicated special efforts to improving skills of women working in carpet weaving and handicrafts. Women groups were trained by specialists to improve the production of carpets, rugs and other handicrafts. New designs were elaborated. Furthermore, a women handicrafts cooperative<sup>54</sup> was established. Now the cooperative operates a workshop with 12 knitting machine "Nawl" and delivers free training to other women. The association provided the physical space (120 sqm) where the workshop was established, a store and shelves to display products. The association markets the cooperative products in return of a percent revenue on sales. It is currently collaborating with specialists and friends to study ways to expand women technical know-how and marketing ability.

c) Other children and youth educational activities include the establishment of an audiovisual library for children and youth, organizing various cultural activities, training of trainers for children activities and camps, language courses, increase participation of school children and youth to activities of the association and to others in neighboring villages, etc.

The association organizes a yearly summer camp that hosts around 200 child. Rigorous selection is practiced in such a way that a maximum of two children per family participate to one camp and a child

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<sup>53</sup> 22,000 animals vaccinated in 1999 and 12,000 animal vaccinated in 1998.

<sup>54</sup> It has received from the Ministry of Tourism, the gold medal for best artisanal work in 1995.

is allowed to no more that two camps within two consecutive years. Around 120 to 130 families in the last six years have sent their kids to the summer camps.

### 3) Environmental activities:

During the period 1991-1998, the association implemented a project for fighting desertification whereby around 45,000 tree (fruit and forest trees) were planted, benefitting around 2000 families.

The association has established and is now planning to expand the tree nursery and increase production of local species under threat as well as forest trees. It is also attempting to improve skills of its members in seed techniques and plant care, establish gardens and green spots in the village and its outskirts, organize tree planting campaigns in collaboration with other CSOs and municipalities, in Arsal and neighboring villages, as well as awareness and training seminars on environment conservation.

The association is a member of the Lebanese Environment Forum and contributes to environmental networking activities.



### 4) Campaigning and Lobbying:

During the period 1992-1998, the association was particularly active as a pressure group, organizing campaigns, drafting petitions, visiting and voicing demands and needs to decision makers including parliamentarians, the prime minister's office, ministers of agriculture, interior, tourism, environment, education, social affairs, etc., pertaining to all aspects of development of the village. This is one way for the association to break the isolation of Arsal and to draw attention to its needs and concerns.

Important on-going demands to decision makers in government, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, etc., regard the establishment of a secondary public school, improving teachers skills; operating the central phone system, installing potable water, waste water and irrigation infrastructure, modernizing the vital registry system, rehabilitating agricultural roads, and regulating the work of quarries based on a land use scheme for the village.

## 3.5 MEMBERSHIP AND BENEFICIARIES

Arsal Rural Development Association counts around sixty members (1999) - all volunteers - composing the "General Assembly". Women have a notable presence (around 55 percent of members). Membership is exclusive to women and men from the community. People from outside Arsal who would like to contribute to the work of the association are called "friends of the association" and are welcomed to participate to activities but are not considered for membership.

Membership of Aرسال is "gradual" as per the association's bylaws and rigorously monitored by the association. Criteria for membership do not relate to size of holding, status, religious or political affiliation. To become a member, a candidate has to volunteer for a year, at the end of which his contribution to the work of the association is evaluated. Based on the outcome, her/his application is accepted or rejected by the steering committee. During this period, candidates may contribute to the various activities and meetings but are not granted the right to vote.

The steering committee also reviews, annually, the list of members and decides, based on members' performance and contribution, of the continuity of their membership.

The association serves around 25,000 people (residents of Aرسال) with a special focus on the 3,000 most vulnerable farmers' families and with emphasis on women, children, students and youth.



### 3.6 ORGANIZATIONAL SET-UP AND EVOLUTION

#### 3.6.1 MODEL OF ORGANIZATION

Arsal Rural Development Association was formally established in 1990. Nevertheless, activities were started in 1986 by a group of individuals who shared a common vision about the future of the village and the threats it faces. During four years of voluntary work, the idea was tested and its sustainability assessed. People's interest, contribution and willingness measured. The association was subsequently founded in 1990, by 14 members.

Arsal Rural Development Association is run by a steering committee elected every two years by the "General Assembly". At present, the steering committee is composed of nine members, three of whom are women.

The steering committee has direct responsibility for implementing the annual workplan, managing the day to day activities, overseeing projects implemented, organising work, carrying out public relations and information activities, build linkages and networking with stakeholders, oversee the performance and monitor membership.

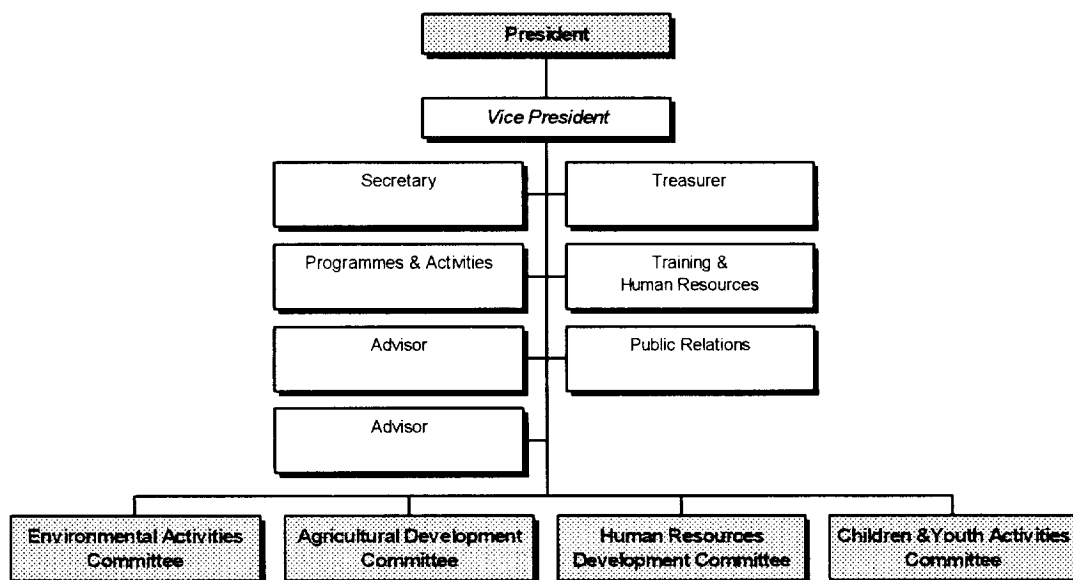
The steering committee is headed by a president, elected every two years for the position from among members of the steering committee.

Though a voluntary-based association, the rapid evolution and expansion of activities has necessitated the recruitment of part time employees. At present, four persons are employed: an administrator, an accountant, a director of programs, and a coordination/networking specialist.

##### 3.6.1.1 Organizational Structure and Evolution

The work of the association is organized along four main thematic committees (environment, agricultural development, human resources development, children and youth activities). The three women members of the steering committee are given responsibilities for training and human resources development activities and for public relations. The third woman member contributes to the committee in her capacity of advisor.

Arsal Rural Development Association  
Organizational Set-up, Sep. 1999



### 3.6.1.2 Leadership:

Although there are no defined criteria for candidature to the steering committee, there is an informal consensus among members on a minimum set of qualifications that candidates to the steering committee should have and especially the president. These are namely technical, human and conceptual skills.

The president of the association and members of the steering committee have the knowledge and ability based on experience, and educational attainment. Their ability to build teamwork and coordinate work is fundamental. They are the moral and technical reference of the association. As for the conceptual skills, i.e. ability to think in terms of long-range plans or strategies, the steering committee has developed a consultative forum where discussions are carried out on a regular basis with members and friends.

### 3.6.1.3 Participatory Planning & Decision Making

According to the association bylaws, the general assembly reviews the year-end report prepared by the steering committee and prepares directives for next year workplan.

The association has transformed the process of planning into a participatory one. Towards the end of the fourth quarter of the year, the steering committee organizes consultation and brainstorming sessions to which members and friends of the association contribute. The steering committee, based on these consultations, draws the elements of next year plan, submits it to the general assembly for review along with the year-end report.

The general assembly brings necessary modifications and returns it to the steering committee, which prepares a detailed workplan and budget for the year to come including activities and possible financing for each (secured and pipeline).

Work is oriented based on teamwork. The flow of work referring to who initiates an activity, who carries it, and who receives is also informal and usually coordinated by the president or heads of committees. Work is also distributed informally and pending availability of members rather than divided into clear levels of responsibilities, functions and/or authority. No levels of specialization are observed.

## **3.6.2 COMMUNICATION**

General meetings are held once a year or as need may be. The steering committee meets monthly or bimonthly to review progress, exchange information, advice, coordination and decision-making. Minutes are taken and archived. Informal meetings and discussions are held more frequently.

Written communication is limited to the two yearly reports of the steering committee: a descriptive activity report made public and distributed to all stakeholders, and an internal evaluation report discussed internally with members of the general assembly. The latter is a critical assessment of the year's activities and performance of the steering committee.

## **3.6.3 TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING**

Training and capacity building makes up a large part of the activities. Special efforts are devoted to building capacity of members (refer to section 5.4 on activities), but also to beneficiaries. It is also an intrinsic part of every program/project carried out.

Empowerment of rural women is an area of special focus. Through the support of the association, the rural women of Aarsal have transformed food production and carpet weaving from private duties into successful income generating activities. By inciting them to organise themselves into production co-operatives, the women cultivated a culture of co-operation and learned to reduce production costs, and improve quality through sharing experience and using quality standards and modern techniques. More training is expected to improve the bargaining power of women within the community, expand their public role in village life and their social status. This is believed to slowly bring about a change in traditional attitudes of rural women and men. While decision-making is still seen as the man's role in Aarsal, activities and volunteer work at the association is expected to slowly impact practices and beliefs, and improve on women's role and decision-making abilities within the family.

### **3.7 APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY / ACTIVITIES**

The association tries to establish itself as a neutral, community-based association, service oriented, seeking objectives of development. It strives to protect its identity, build credibility and win the trust of beneficiaries, friends and donors. Members share common non-written fundamentals pertaining to keeping the association independent from political, religious and family affiliations that are strongly rooted in the area. Towards this end the association does not collaborate with religious or sectarian associations or non-governmental organizations whose activities target a certain category of people. It does not collaborate with certain embassies or religious missions. Given the strong family ties that characterize the region, the association does not collaborate with candidates for elections (parliamentarians especially).

#### **3.7.1 PARTICIPATORY APPROACH**

The association bases its work on the participation of local community at every stage of projects life cycle, from identification to delivery. Through volunteering their time, women and men participate, learn to voice themselves and their needs, and accept responsibility for the work entrusted. Through financial contribution, whether in cash (fees for camps, contribution to projects costs, etc.) or in kind (labor), the community shares responsibility in producing outputs and developing them. This has been the approach used since inception and which is continuously monitored by the General Assembly.

Local and international organizations who have become project partners: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Agricultural Research Institute, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oxfam and others have adopted and further supported this approach. Local user's networks were established whereby these organizations instituted direct interaction with focus groups such as women, herders, youth, etc. and between/among development organizations, scientists, volunteers, etc. The association coordinated the work and ensured smooth interaction.

Such participatory approaches have been critical to the work of the association.

#### **3.7.2 INCUBATOR**

Moreover, in what concerns the women cooperative for food processing, the herdsman/livestock producers' cooperative and the women handicrafts cooperative, the association has been acting as an incubator for those projects, supporting them in establishing themselves, helping them acquire licences, providing them with access to know-how through the association linkages and friends and through specialists from the project "Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands in Lebanon" (refer to section 5.8). The association continues at present to provide them with facilities and counseling. It is also seeking venues for marketing their products through delivery contracts with consumer's cooperatives. It is also organizing training for their members in view of building their capacity to start becoming independent economic and administrative structures.

#### **3.7.3 EQUIPMENT & AUTOMATION**

The association operates with minimum tools. A typewriter, donated to the association, is now used by one member who thus learned to type. A photocopying machine was acquired and recently a PC and a printer. The part-time employee, in charge of administrative issues, is now receiving training on office productivity tools.

#### **3.7.4 ADVOCACY//INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION**

According to the president of the association, advocacy is an important activity that would complement the work of the association and promote its messages. It is particularly important in environmental and natural resources conservation activities as it promotes messages of conservations and educates people to practices for managing their resources.

Advocacy and communication would be particularly supportive to the campaigning/lobbying activities of the organization and to building awareness of Arsalis regarding their rights.

At present, advocacy is limited to verbal presentations during meeting, conferences, and seminars.

As for information about the association's work and projects, these are limited to few unsolicited articles about Arsal and the association in addition to few advertisements for eco-tourism activities that were placed in major universities and faculties of agriculture.

The need for and importance of information/communication in the work of the organization have been discussed internally at many occasions. There is not yet a consensus on the approach to adopt. Two views prevail; one promotes an attitude of low profile and opposes publicity at large. The other promotes the use of media in campaigning for the village needs and in demonstrating to the public achievements and progress.

### 3.8 NETWORKING AND LINKAGES

Arsal rural development association strives on networking and linkage building with a range of development partners. This has been critical and maybe the key to the success of its programs and innovative activities.

While Arsal has not received the kind of international and governmental attention and support it would have liked or expected, the association has been able to mobilise small-scale support from a range of different partners. In order to promote co-ordination and communication, a Network for Research and Development in Arsal was formed. This is a unique endeavour (Refer to box). The network includes, amongst others, the American University of Beirut, Oxfam, Green Line, the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas, as well as the International Development Research Centre in Canada.

Linkages with central government administration are being developed namely with line ministries concerned with the activities of the association such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

At local levels, strong ties are built with the municipality especially since the treasurer of the association was elected head of the municipal council. It is also worth noting that the 18 elected members of the municipal council are also members of the association – a definite indicator of the association popularity and the credibility it enjoys.

An important part of the voluntary work performed by the association's members is to identify and strengthen linkages with different partners. These linkages include outside development partners, outreach to community members in Arsal as well as to other communities in order to promote mutual learning and exchange of experience.

Arsal Rural Development Association is now part of the environment network that includes nine community associations and NGOs working in environment conservation. It collaborates with other NGOs such as YMCA, Family Planning Association, the Manonites, etc.

#### A Special Networking experience

The association implemented during the period April 1995-December 1998, in collaboration with the American University of Beirut, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, a project entitled "Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands in Lebanon", financed by the International Development Research Center (IDRC). The project aimed at supporting the association's efforts in building sustainable community development.

It emphasized farmer's training together with building capacity for direct involvement in the formulation and implementation of resource management strategies through the establishment of subnetworks. These subnetworks included Arsalis, facilitators and scientists working in a participatory approach.

1. The subnetwork of herdsmen/livestock producers worked at improving the grazing areas, the health of livestock, and marketing situation of flocks. The work was done in cooperation with IFAD, UNDP and others by giving incentives for farmers (grazing), flock vaccination and establishment of the first livestock cooperative in Lebanon. In addition, most farmers were trained on preventive health programmes.
2. The subnetwork of fruit growers worked for improving productivity of fruit trees. As an example, farmers learned how to plant and take care of cherry trees (a new initiative).
3. The subnetwork of women groups built women's capacity through income generating projects co-financed by IFAD, OXFAM and Canada Fund. The projects varied between food processing (standardizing food processing) and carpet weaving. The women received training on both. In addition, they were exposed to health awareness campaigns specifically on reproductive health and sanitation.

The project empowered Arsal community to develop sustainable agricultural activities by establishing local cooperatives, better use of livestock and land resources, and better networking. It has also stimulated supplementary off-farm income generating activities for women (food processing - carpet weaving). The achievements of the project contributed as well to creating awareness among the local population about environmental issues (avoid soil erosion by planting native shrubs for example).

Active involvement of local stakeholders and capacity building of the local partners led to intrinsic mechanisms for sustainability. Members of the municipality board, elected in 1998, are partners in the subnetwork committees, and continue to act as partners to improve and develop the village and to provide the communities with the necessary resources (financial or technical) to improve their living conditions.

The project contributed to solve the agricultural and land use problems of the Arsal population. It has provided them with more rewarding and beneficial alternatives of how to generate an optimal land use map for natural resource management of their land, which was positively reflected on their living conditions.

to undertake youth camps and vocational training programs.

For an isolated community like Aarsal, networking provides links to much needed resources and ideas, and promotes communication and collaboration. As declared by the association president, Mr. Kassem Al-Shab: *"Without this kind of outreach, our comprehensive programme for community development would be impossible"*.

## **3.9 CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINABILITY**

### **3.9.1 TECHNICAL**

The work of the association suffers from the general low skill level of the population. Although the work of the association has gone through a learning process whereby knowledge was acquired through trial and error, a lot is still to be learnt, especially in managerial practices, accounting and administrative matters, etc. Indeed, the association faces severe difficulties when planning and budgeting its yearly activities and requires much training in all aspects of project management.

Technical skills, of all nature, are lacking in the area due to the low levels of educational attainment. As a result of skills shortage, the association sometimes fails to provide adequate technical support needed for its projects such in the case of improving designs of carpets and rugs or improving the traditional knitting machine (Nawl), or marketing products, etc., and has subsequently to resort to friends.

Also as a result of skills shortage, the association sometimes fails to promote its case in a proper way, whether with the government or with international agencies. The lack of skills renders writing proposals or project ideas, even getting them typed and presented in a proper way, a real challenge. The foreign language ability is a constraint to adequate communication with potential donors.

The association has also a long learning to make in the area of advocacy and communication. Approaching the media is quite difficult. Any planning or programming in this area faces major problems due to lack of know-how.

### **3.9.2 FINANCIAL**

The association has three main sources of funding:

- (1) Annual membership fees,
- (2) Contributions in cash or in kind by various welfare associations and friends,
- (3) Voluntary work (construction, etc.) donated by individuals,
- (4) Income generated from:
  - activities organized by the association: Eco-tourism, summer camps, etc.,
  - sales of food products produced by the women food processing cooperative,
  - sales of handicrafts, carpets and rugs produced by women artisans,
- (5) Cost sharing with beneficiaries, UN-agencies, partner NGOs, etc.,
- (6) Government assistance:
  - Ministry of Tourism: annual cash contribution (three consecutive years),
  - Ministry of Environment,
  - Ministry of Agriculture (in kind: trees),
  - Ministry of Social Affairs (in kind: training).
- (7) Assistance from International donors.

In 1993-1994, the largest part of the budget was covered from assistance by international donors (around 85 percent). Since 1997, the association started a financial sustainability policy whereby sources of

income where diversified and more income generating projects initiated. At present, dependency on external assistance decreased to 35 percent (estimates).

The association hopes to be able to ensure a regular inflow of funds from its activities, but the most significant challenge is ensuring that current expenses are covered by revenues.

The major challenge that the association faces at this point in time, after nearly ten years of formally being established and fourteen years of activity, is the transformation into a self-sustaining institution with the capacity and managerial know-how to survive and innovate.

Internal discussions are currently on-going concerning challenges and requirements for Aرسال Rural Development Association to lay basis of sustainability and start institutionalizing its work. Discussions are lead by a group of members, mainly the founders of the association, who are aware of the lack of institutional mechanisms that regulate the work of the association and renders it dependent on the personal drives of its leaders.

Awareness building among other members on the need to institutionalize the work and the challenges faced are mandatory to such transformation.

### 3.10 FINAL REMARKS: A COMMUNITY WITH A VISION

It is no doubt that Aرسال rural development association stands out as a best practice in rural community development. The association through its approach and creative initiatives has broken the isolation of the village, built strong ties with the community and strong commitment to its advancement. While the activities undertaken may represent small steps forward as compared to the size of deprivation and needs, their impact is large, trickling down to other neighboring communities. Indeed, Aرسال Rural Development Association has become a model for neighboring villages (Kiyaa', Fakha, and others) who are now trying to institute similar community associations in order to promote their needs and involve volunteers from their village to participate in the development of their community."

Aرسال has been chosen to be a focal point for ICARDA regional project (Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands) as a result of the ability of the local community to participate in decisions that affect their own lives.

Referring to FAO people's Participation Programme and literature on the importance of full participation of rural poor in development, rural poor forming small-self-help groups, pooling community resources in pursuit of their own objectives, etc., these find a live experience in Aرسال.

"*Aرسال is a community with a vision and a future!*"<sup>55</sup>. The enthusiasm and strong sense of purpose that have kept the association going over the last ten years and built the will of its members to make a difference needs to be supported and strengthened.

## 4- STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Local institutional capacity building for rural development is a lengthy process. It requires time and resources but most of all appropriate strategies and concepts.

It has to be demand driven as much as supply oriented. Creating this demand at the level of local community associations requires actions to encourage commitment and endorsement of the board and senior management. Most often awareness and sensitization workshops are needed to promote an adaptable approach to change, a willingness to explore alternatives. A clear picture of the organizational future to convince members and stakeholders of the necessity to implement the change is also needed.

Furthermore, strategies need to target as well local government – the second stakeholders in local institutional development, for "to the extent that the national leadership of a country is opposed to or non-supportive of local institutional development, the prospects for developing local capacities are diminished."

<sup>55</sup> Yadan by Yad, UN Volunteers Newsletter, issue 3, May 1999.

It should be kept in mind that pockets of self-reliance initiatives, such as the ones described in the case studies, were given impetus by the neglect of the center. Nevertheless, as local government is establishing itself in the life of rural communities after long years of inactivity, and given the significant budget constraints, lack of technical and managerial capacity, etc., local governments are likely to feel threatened by an increase in local institutional capacity at the level of the communities. This may undermine or at least not promote local institutional development efforts.

#### **4.1 STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**

Although the term "institutional development" seems to refer to things - to structures, procedures and abstract performance capabilities - it should always call to mind people, their skills, motivation, and personal efficacy<sup>56</sup>.

The first element of any plan for institutional development is thus developing human capacities. This may be achieved through:

- Training programs that would improve skills and produce leaders that are to become knowledge brokers. This need has been reiterated in the two case studies.
- Leadership development programs especially at the level of community-based associations. Steering committees, for example, need to be trained on mechanisms for proposing and reaching agreements on goals, devising strategies, motivating others, resolving conflicts, overseeing projects implementation, etc. Leadership in this sense needs to be approached and promoted as a function that all institutions need to perform rather than a matter of personalities. Focus should be made on accountability of leaders to their constituencies, and needs and mechanisms for replacement.

The second element of an institutional development plan would be strengthening institutional capacity through deployment of "catalysts" - persons who specialize in community organization and are given the mandate to getting the institutional processes within a community started. A number of the most successful experiences in local institutional development as listed by Upholf<sup>57</sup> used catalysts.

The third element would be through strengthening institutional networks and support basis through area networks (community associations working in similar areas).

The fourth element would be strengthening local capacity for economic resources mobilization and management through:

- Expanding the information base on potential donors and funds availability;
- Encourage collection schemes (periodic donation campaigns, etc.);
- Strengthen financial accounting (training on bookkeeping, inventory management, cost-accounting and investment decision making, etc.);
- Strengthen advocacy/communication/information capacity;
- Etc.

#### **4.2 STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

"Local institutional development is itself a strategy of decentralization, to create capacities at several local levels for handling authority and responsibility"<sup>58</sup>. For any local institutional development activities to

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<sup>56</sup> Upholf N., "Local Institutional Development: An Analytical Sourcebook with Cases", Kumarian Press, USA, 1986, pp 421.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Upholf N., "Local Institutional Development: An Analytical Sourcebook with Cases", Kumarian Press, USA, 1986, pp 421.

take place, a certain degree of decentralization within the government structure itself is indeed required in order for official decision making to be brought closer to local levels.

Despite municipal elections, decentralization in Lebanon, in the sense of increased impact and actions by the municipal councils, is still theoretical as municipalities have very little leverage over their resources, especially their financial resources. Some calculated indicators show that the expenditure decentralization ratio has dropped to 3.28 percent in 1996 compared to a pre-war ratio of 5.28. On the other hand, the revenue decentralization ratio has slightly increased from 5.14 before the war to 5.89 in 1996. In both cases, data indicated very low levels of effective decentralization, or alternatively high levels of centralization in Lebanon<sup>59</sup>.

Although the successive cabinets have emphasized deconcentration, it is estimated that the administrative machinery remains highly concentrated whereby all, even minor transactions have to be completed in the Capital. Also, the proportion of civil servants working in regional offices out of total number of civil servants is believed to be low.

Decentralization and actions at local levels are key to strengthening political representation at the local level and discharging the potentials of local groups<sup>60</sup>. Supporting municipalities in achieving greater autonomy, building their capacity and activating their role as service providers is one step on this path.

This would also contribute to local administration support to a participatory climate where civil society would be involved in development activities of relevance.

Building capacity of local administration towards increased participation by local community and constructive interaction between government and civil society strengthens local community and the basis for development.

Getting administrative and technical staff to work cooperatively with CSOs and understand their role, along with training of administration staff is crucial.

Awareness and sensitization of local administration and municipalities on the need to build linkages with local community associations and involving them in delivering programmes and projects is also crucial.

Such interactions are ingredients of long-term peace building and local development in Lebanon.

## 4.3 SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

### 4.3.1 DATABASE ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS

#### Objective:

Provide for a comprehensive, up-to-date information on local institutions working in rural areas that would be made available to the public on-line.

#### Description:

The project consist of three phases: the first phase would be an investigation phase whereby all categories of local institutions would be surveyed and information collected pertaining to their name and address, legal status, date of formation, type(s) of activity, geographical coverage, number of staff, annual expenditure, sources of funding and other support, contact persons, etc.

In the second phase, the information collected would be screened, verified, classified into categories and organized into a searchable database. Criteria and design parameters would be established. The database would ideally be web enabled and published on the website of a host government organization, preferable the Ministry of Agriculture ([www.agriculture.gov.lb](http://www.agriculture.gov.lb)).

In the third phase an action plan for marketing and maintaining this database would be drawn covering data collection and verification methods, confidentiality safeguards, training, ownership and control of the database, etc.

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<sup>59</sup> United Nations Resident Coordinator System in Lebanon, Common Country Assessment 1998 (CCA), Part I:CCA Report and Part II: Follow-up on International Conferences, December 1998.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



### **4.3.2 TRAINING PROGRAMME ON LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Objective:**

The objective of the programme will be to help stakeholders develop an understanding of the strategic challenges facing local institutions individually and as they interact with each others, and the key organizational and management issues facing them as they build their capacity to become sustainable and to enhance their role in the local community.

#### **Description:**

The two-part programme would consist of two training workshops that will take place at a time distance of five to six month.

The first workshop would address local managers and key personnel of NGOs working in rural community development, active local community associations as well as members of local administrations/local government (municipalities or others) interacting with these associations.

For local NGOs and community based associations (CBOs), the emphasis would most likely be on different issues than for local administration /government. The language for those would be different and the emphasis rather put on building their understanding of the role of NGOs and local community based associations, the way they work, and on the role of local administrations and government in supporting the building of effective and sustainable community based associations and NGOs.

For NGOs and CBOs the emphasis would be on building an understanding of the current role and thinking in NGO management, assess some of the models and frameworks involved, expose them to some of the issues facing NGOs and local community associations around the world, enhance their awareness of management issues generally and use this knowledge to assess the impact of their management style and the way they work and interact on the local communities they serve. Participants would prepare case studies based on their own work, which would be followed-up during the second workshop.

The workshops shall be designed to develop the skills and understanding needed by the different players and as such will draw on both theoretical frameworks as well as issues of practical concern. The approach adopted shall be a structured, but facilitative process, which will work to address the specific needs and expectations of the participants. This shall be achieved through a mix of formal lectures, case studies, experiential exercises, and group discussion.

The second workshop, which shall be a follow-up act, would bring all stakeholders together and focus on more practical issues related to local environment and drawing on operational experience It would solicit ideas from and discuss possibilities with, representatives of NGOs and Government administrations concerning options and approaches for supporting and strengthening local community development associations and improving their operating environment.

The follow-up workshop would address key organizational characteristics of a well functioning structure and positive interaction with other organizations, the operational issues affecting the work of these associations including issues concerning developing economically sustainable structures. The workshop would also discuss approaches to capacity building as well as case studies of fairly unsuccessful attempts.

## **4.4 SUPPORTIVE ACTIONS**

### **4.4.1 THE NEED FOR A BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Notwithstanding CSOs efforts, the challenge remains at the government Level to start devising and implementing a strategy for balanced development on a countrywide basis to sustain the positive achievements and reverse current disparities trends in underserved areas by reducing gaps in key development indicators in the regions and bringing progress to the national average.

National consultations with the main economic and social players would give the strategy a more aware and supportive constituency, would help the government better sharpen its focus and order its local development priorities and orient better CSOs prioritization, coordination, leadership, programming, and evaluation efforts.

Focus on the reduction of disparities means also allocation of additional resources to the underserved areas of the country, coupled with serious work to improve accessibility to credit and quality of basic social services.

NGOs, community based organizations and civil society at large, need to pursue their efforts to lobby and advocate for government policy to move towards implementing development activities in targeted regions –through, for example, increased allocation of resources from sectoral line ministries to these regions and through building linkages and tighter cooperation with municipalities and other local administration. A special effort should focus on strengthening local community initiatives and increasing awareness at the local community level for building a social network that can impact government policy decisions.

UN agencies and donors need to strengthen and support the initiatives taken by the government in developing regions outside Beirut through supporting country wide initiatives in health, skills training, vocational education, income diversification, etc.

#### 4.4.2 SUPPORT IN DATA

Lebanese government specifically the Central Administration of Statistics needs to put a framework for building a base for social statistics of relevance to enable better monitoring of the socio-economic scenes at the local regional levels through key indicators of relevance disaggregated by urban/rural and/or regionally significant breakdowns (Caza level maybe). Present national figures from various sources need to be reviewed and brought to a comparable definition in order to accurately measure rural-urban trends. Where possible data needs to be adjusted to a national rural definition in order to avoid erratic dips and peaks in data. Towards this end, a work programme may be put in place in collaboration with the UN system agencies or other donors to ensure international comparability.

Integrated multi-topic surveys need to be conducted regularly with a special purpose to fill data gaps, identify most vulnerable groups and provide insights on regional disparities, which are in need of targeted support. "Particular attention need to be paid to indicators capturing regional disparities and disparities within specific groups as well to indicators where data are poor or non available. It is also recommended to regularly conduct small-scale indicator surveys of households and enterprises to up-date information available. This is essential in view of the rapid pace of change and development in Lebanon. The data gathered should be made available electronically and disseminated using web technologies. Data bases need to be created and published on-line and thus made available to support policy analysis on social issues, research, modeling, etc. and to provide as well information for the design and planning of development programmes."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> United Nations Resident Coordinator System in Lebanon, Common Country Assessment 1998 (CCA), Part I:CCA Report and Part II: Follow-up on International Conferences, December 1998.

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**ANNEX 1**  
**RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES, TENTATIVE OUTLINE AND WORKPLAN**

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## Rational, Objectives and Tentative Outline

### Rural Community Development: Strengthening Institutional Capacity

#### RATIONALE

International donor agencies and development organizations have recently come to recognize how crucial "institutional development" is for the overall development success. The majority of investments however have been focused at the national level to the most visible institutions. Local institutions, the closest to the intended beneficiaries, are "allocated fewer resources and are treated almost afterthoughts (Uphoff, 1986)".

Five main activity areas for rural development stand out as major focuses of local, national and international concern. These are:

- Natural resources management
- Rural infrastructure
- Human resources development
- Agricultural development
- Non-agricultural enterprises

What kinds and combinations of local institutions are supporting Agricultural development activities in rural areas in Lebanon?

What measures are most likely to enable them to function efficiently and effectively?  
Training ??? Leadership development???? Forging networks of local institutions having horizontal & vertical linkages?? Etc.

Public Sector		Voluntary Sector		Private Sector	
Local Administration (LA)	Local Government (LG)	Member Organizations (MOs)	Co-operatives (Co-ops)	Service Organizations (SOs)	Private Businesses (PBs)
Bureaucratic Institutions	Political Institutions	Local organizations (based on the principle of membership direction and control; these can become institutions)		Profit-Oriented Institutions	
Local agencies and staff of central government ministries	Elected or appointed bodies such as municipalities, having authority to deal with development and regulatory tasks	Local self-help associations dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Multiple tasks</u> (local development associations)</li> <li>• <u>Specific tasks</u> (Village health committee)</li> <li>• <u>Needs of members</u> (tenants union)</li> </ul>	Local organizations pooling members' economic resources for their benefit (credit unions, producer co-ops, marketing co-ops, etc.) Increase productivity of economic activity	Local organizations that help members and other than members (Red cross, service clubs, etc.)	Independent operations or branches of extra-local enterprises engaged in manufacturing, services and/or trade)
Accountable to bureaucratic superiors	Accountable to local residents	Accountable to their members and local community		Accountable to their management May be subject to some public regulations	
Beneficiaries do not determine the activities of the organization		Beneficiaries do determine the activities of the organization Action is collective Decisions are taken by consensus and persuasion Flexible and adaptive			Beneficiaries do not determine the activities of the organization
Have the force of law and resources of the State				Public funds	Private funds Public funds through subsidies or contracts

# Rural Community Development Strengthening Institutional Capacity

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Identify measures to enable rural institutions to function efficiently and effectively

### 1. INVESTIGATION

- Recognize roles
- Look into objectives, structures and resources
- Strength and weaknesses

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build institutional capacity
- Enhance networking with surrounding environment
- Awareness creation in public opinion
- 

## TENTATIVE OUTLINE

### I- STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

#### II- BRIEF BACKGROUND

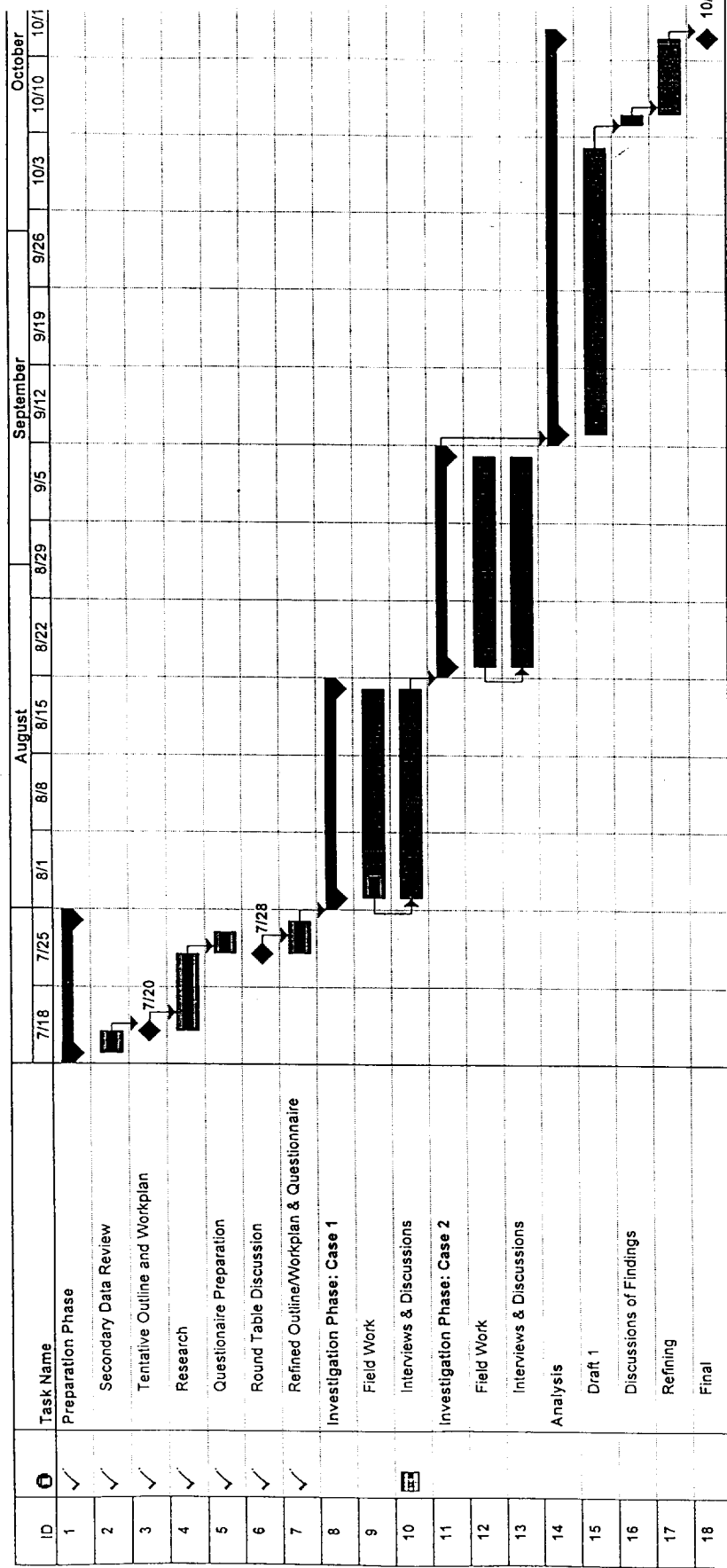
- Rural Lebanon: The rural and agrarian context and Rural/Urban disparities
- Policies of the Lebanese Government concerning Balanced Development and actions taken (programmes, projects, etc.)
- Institutions working in rural development: Public sector, Private sector, NGOs, others.

#### III- Case Studies

- Background
- Mission & Objectives
- Organizational Structure and Evolution
- Management Methods
- Services and services growth / Activities and achievements
- Funding / Revenue generation
- Linkages: Research / Universities / Government / NGOs / Other org.
- Socio-political context
- Challenges faced
- Sustainability

#### IV- Conclusion & Recommendations

## Rural Community Development Strengthening Institutional Capacity



**ANNEX 2**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

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# Rural Community Development Strengthening Institutional Capacity

## Questionnaire

Name of Institution

Full Address

Name of Interviewee

### 1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES:

Date of establishment: \_\_\_\_\_ and legal number: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of offices, places, geographical area & population served:

Reasons why the organization/Institution was established:

Main activities/Services provided to community by order of importance:

Initially

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

At Present

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Main activities/Services provided to members:

Initially

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

At Present

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Members and membership growth and % women to men (reasons if stagnant, if no women)

Group membership criteria (did they change): (size of holding, status, political affiliation, etc..)

## **2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EVOLUTION:**

### **2.1 STRUCTURE**

Initial structure and functions of the various organizational units (provide/draw chart or supporting documents, constitution, bi laws (provide copies)).

How it has evolved over time and why (document the change and its driving forces).

### **2.2 LEADERSHIP**

Procedures for selecting/electing officials/board/etc. How many women in leadership positions?

How often leaders are rotated? To what extent they are active and involved (provide examples)?

Traditional/religious/spiritual leaders, landlords, etc. occupying leadership positions. Honorary members.

### **2.3 STAFFING (IF ANY)**

Describe (administrative, technical, etc.) % women? Are job descriptions written & clear.

How technical staff are trained and on what?

### **2.4 MEETINGS**

Frequency of general meetings, number of participants, average duration of the meeting, preliminary preparations (agenda) and issues discussed.

Date last meeting held, number of participants, duration of the meeting, sample agenda /issues

Frequency of leaders meeting number of participants, average duration of the meeting, preliminary preparations (agenda) and issues discussed.

Date last meeting held, number of participants, duration of the meeting, sample agenda /issues

### **3. SERVICE DELIVERY / ACTIVITIES:**

#### **3.1 PLANNING & DECISION MAKING**

Is an annual Plan and budget prepared, who prepares it, approval cycles, etc.

#### **3.2 PROJECT LIFE CYCLE**

Describe process from identification of needs to execution including approval cycles. Is any monitoring done & how. Are Indicators used (quantitative/qualitative) and when (on-set of project or post).

#### **3.3 INFORMATION BASE, RECORD KEEPING AND ARCHIVING**

What kind of databases, community information, etc. is used in setting priority and undertaking projects?

How data is updated and recorded? Are these shared (lessons learned) with the rest of the organization or organizations you collaborate with? Are they published in any way (paper, web, etc.)

#### **3.4 REPORTING LINES**

How is reporting done on service delivery and how frequent?

#### **3.5 ADVOCACY**

Is any promotional activity done? How and for what purpose?

#### **3.6 TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES**

Are staff computer literate? Describe automation status

Is training done on regular basis and in what areas?

#### 4. REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Annual revenues over the last three years

Source	year	Year	year

Annual expenditure over the last three years

Type	year	year	year

#### 5. LINKAGES WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations you keep linkages or collaborate with and reasons? (Farmers groups, NGOs, Government agencies, universities, private sector, etc.)

Do any of those organization attend meetings, participate to activities, etc.?

#### 6. SUSTAINABILITY

What is your organization comparative advantage?

Financially: How independent and self reliant is the organization? If not, why? And how this sustainability can be built?

Technically: How well trained are its management and staff? Do they need external support? how this sustainability can be built?

## **7. PROBLEMS FACED**

Please list and describe problems faced.

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## **8. ASSISTANCE**

What areas/types of assistance is most crucial to the organization?

Assistance? Facilitation? Promotion?

## **9. REMARKS**

**ANNEX 3**  
**MINUTES OF PREPARATORY MEETING**

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**Round Table Discussion**  
**Rural Community Development: Strengthening Institutional Capacity**

**Summary of the Discussions**

**PURPOSE**

On Wednesday July 28, 1999, 11:00 a.m., the Agriculture Section, Sectoral Issues and Policies Division (SIPD), invited a selected number of representatives of Non Governmental Organizations, local community associations and managers of development projects undertaken by UNDP in rural areas (please refer to Annex 1: list of participants) to a round table discussion in ESCWA premises, UN House.

The objectives of the meeting were the following:

- Overview of current activities by main institutions/organizations/UN agencies projects in the field of rural community development.
- Discussion of challenges and measures to strengthen institutional capacity of local institutions working in rural community development.

This meeting was convened in preparation for the study currently being prepared by the Agriculture Section on "Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Rural Community Development".

The study aims at identifying measures to enable rural institutions to function efficiently and effectively. It consists of an assessment of selected rural institutions (2 case studies) and is hoped to identify challenges and to recommend plan of action to strengthen the process of institution building in rural communities (please refer to Annex 2: Rational, Objectives and Tentative Outline).

The discussion started at 1:00 a.m. and ended at 2: 45 p.m.

The participants each presented the activities of his/her institution/organization/project in the field of rural community development.

The participants then dwelled into what kinds and combinations of local institutions are supporting agricultural development activities in rural areas and what measures are most likely to enable them to function efficiently and effectively: training of members, leadership development, relationship with local administration and local government institutions, forging networks of local institutions having various linkages, relationship with the private sector, etc.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

1. The discussion was opened by Dr. Mohamad Gabr, Chief, Agriculture Section / SIPD, who welcomed the participants and presented the activities of the section in the last few years, work programme and recent publications namely the farm data handbook.
2. Ms. Lamia El-Moubayed, Economic Affairs Officer appointed on short-term basis to undertake the above mentioned study briefed the participants on the objectives of the meeting.
3. Mr. Naser Al-Fergani then briefed the participants on the background and objectives of UNDP project in Baalbeck-Hermel (B/H) area and presented recent activities, difficulties and challenges. He underlined that the project ensured from the start a close working relationship with rural communities and therefore their ownership of the objectives and outputs of the project. For this purpose, the area of B/H was divided into 22 zones. A local committee in each zone consisting of key representatives of the community and recently representatives of municipalities was formed in each and entrusted with direct coordination with the project, reflecting needs and proposing priorities.

Mr. Fergani stressed the importance of working with local community associations and the involvement of the project in capacity building at the level of individuals (all staff of the project are from the region) and community based associations to which frequent training sessions are devoted. He presented Mr. Gabr a report of the project progress and deliverables.

4. Ms. Jihad Sukarieh, representing the local welfare and development association of Al-Fakha briefed the participants on the difficult socio-economic conditions of the region in general and Fakha in particular. She stressed the limited employment opportunities available to people of Fakha particularly youth who are mostly employed in the teaching sector and in military. Ms. Sukarieh thus justified the need for creating the association.

The association's activities started by delivering training to women on handicrafts and various skills particularly weaving and knitting. This led the association to establish a small-scale factory. The latter has been functioning for the last four year and facing severe marketing problems.

Furthermore, the association, in response to the needs of farmers to market their products is currently attempting to establish a cooperative for processing apricot. In cooperation with the Canadian Institute for Development Assistance (CIDA) the association is currently managing a small-scale credit scheme to 45 women to support the production of handmade carpets speciality of Fakha.

The association also organizes yearly training courses for young women on first aid and primary health services, as the region is most needy of such. At present it cooperates with the Cooperative of Housing Foundation (CHF) to provide computer training via mobile training centers to rural communities in the village and its surroundings



Ms. Sukarieh named various constraints to institutional development among which the non-availability of supportive economic infrastructure and government regulations such as in marketing of agricultural products, provision of irrigation water, etc. which limit the impact and sometimes undermine the efforts of the association to improve the living conditions of local community. A problematic also occurred recently after the new municipal elections putting on antagonistic sides the association and the municipality. The latter looks at the association with eyes of suspicion and perceives it as a competitor rather than a supportive complementary local self-help voluntary and member based organization.

5. Mr. Fergani here intervened to outline that although such perceptions prevail at the moment, these would be diluted within the coming years. Municipal elections having taken place after long awaited years, the interaction public administration/local association is bound to live and outlive few frictions. People will realize soon the need to work collaboratively towards servicing and developing their communities.

6. Mr. Ayman Abdallah, Chief of Party, Cooperative of Housing Foundation acknowledged this point of view. He then introduced the participants to the activities and approaches of CHF especially the cluster committee approach that CHF uses in identifying and managing development projects. This approach groups a specific number of villages into a target cluster. At present CHF works with six clusters, three in Baalbeck-Hermel area and three in Ackar area. Each village within the cluster elects a committee made up of informal and formal leaders that CHF works with to identify projects. During project development, CHF in cooperation with a local NGO (Cooperation for Development) provides adequate technical assistance to the local committee and, when applicable, community disputes resolution techniques to ensure projects' success. The committee is ultimately responsible for project management thus local capacity is built through training committee members on techniques for identifying needs, preparing proposals and budgets, requesting price quotations, etc. A large degree of ownership and sustainability is thus ensured, as local residents are the ones who choose, manage and contribute to financing their projects.

7. A discussion followed on the extent to which cost sharing by local residents is possible.

8. Mr. Hassan Ali Atwi, Agriculture Manager, Jihad Al-Binàa Development Association, introduced the participants to the objectives and activities of Jihad Al-Binàa which mainly encompass reconstruction of damaged houses by Israeli aggressions and agricultural development activities. The latter were started in 1987 in the Bekaa area and in 1994 in south Lebanon. Jihad Al-Binàa now employs sixteen agricultural engineers and two veterinarians.

It currently operates a company that sells agricultural inputs at lower than market prices (30-35%) and delivers extension services to farmers.

In the Bekaa area, Jihad Al-Binàa is working at easing the marketing problems of agricultural products by developing the processing sector. It has established a tomato processing and canning industry that is processing 100 tons of locally produced tomatoes per day.

Jehad Al-Binàa also administers credit to farmers of the Bekaa. It targets farmers with size of holdings ranging between 15-20 dunums. Credit is mostly in kind with a ceiling equivalent to US\$ 3,000. Credit requests are approved and supervised by Jehad Al-Binàa field engineers. This operation is near completing its second year. Jehad Al-Binàa is currently undertaking an evaluation and assessment of impact of this operation. A report is expected by end of 1999 following which the second phase of the credit operation would be planned and launched.

Jehad Al-Binàa is also active in delivering specialized training in apiculture and pisciculture assisted by Iranian experts with extensive experience in the field of honey production and processing, and in river fish culture. It is currently planning for opening two extension centers in Douris and Hermel villages, Bekaa area.

Another area of activity is setting agricultural cooperatives (Bekaa and South). According to Mr. Atwi, this activity is facing various constraints and Jehad Al-Binàa is yet to determine if this activity is worth investing time, efforts and resources in.

To compensate for the non-inclusion of farmers in the National Social Security Funds, Jehad Al-Binàa established a farmer's health solidarity fund. At present two funds are operational: one in the south area with 3,344 family members (nearly 20,000 beneficiary) and the second in the Bekaa with 700 family members. Membership fee was set at LL 10,000. The fund is now valued at LL 162 million.

Jehad Al-Binàa, working very closely with farmers communities attempts to support agriculture production by providing farmers with credit facilities, extension services and access to inputs at cost price thus allowing farmers to reduce their costs of production and raise their competitiveness.

9. Mr. Kassem Al-Shab, representing the local rural development association of Irsal, North Bekaa, listed a number of problems facing rural development among which:
- limited decision making of local community,
  - absence of government policies for rural development,
  - pre-defined projects or programmes funded by donors,
  - lack of capacity of local community to prioritize needs and define projects priorities;
  - priorities being too many and too interlaced.

Mr. Al-Shab then presented the characteristics of Irsal community, which counts around 30,000 inhabitants with 20,000 permanent residents. Irsal has a natality rate of 560 newborns per year. Only one public school (primary level) is available. Irsal's farmers face a major transportation problem since the village is 15 Km away from agricultural land. Precarious roads and old vehicles cause the loss of more than 12% of production.

Irsal community has been active though in establishing five local community associations each dealing with a different development aspect (the "Irshad" association in charge of developing the carpet handicraft and running the community dispensary; the cooperative of livestock producers, the agricultural cooperative, the "Mouneh" cooperative in charge of producing and marketing local home made products and the association for rural development). They have started

to network but problems faced their collaborative work, which Mr. Al-Shab blames on the lack of a culture and a tradition of organizing and organization and on the family/clan cleavages.

The multidisciplinary nature of the needs and the lack of capacity pushed all associations to work in all fields of development. According to Mr. Al-Shab, lack of capacity due to a lower education and skill level of rural people remains the main constraint to any development work from all points of view: technical, managerial, advocacy, etc.

Mr. Al-Shab also stressed that this problem threatens the survival of the local community associations and the continuity and sustainability of their work.

Finally Mr. Al-Shab summarized the major activities carried out by the various associations in Irsal. These are:

- Running and expanding a nursery for plants
- Training of community women and men in various fields
- Awareness raising on health and other issues
- Food processing plant
- Mouneh processing cooperative
- Animal husbandry cooperative

10. Mr. Saed Zahr, representing Mercy Corps International, stressed the importance of local community participation in all phases of project development and gave the example of the revolving fund project in Dayr Al-Fardis, Hama, Syria and in Egypt where local community contributed to funding and managing the fund and later on took over full control.

Mr. Zahr then briefly presented the activity of Mercy Corps International in Lebanon mainly establishing two agricultural training center in Bebnin and Sahel Al-Khiam area in south Lebanon and a prototype farm.

11. Mr. Adib Nehme, Project Manager, UNDP and the Ministry of Social Affairs Programme for Improving the Living Conditions of the Poor presented a brief about the project.

Mr. Nehme underlined that economic activities in rural areas especially in Ackar region, North Lebanon, where the programme is most active, are very limited; most of the population being either farmers or employed in the military. Disparities and concentration in income and wealth, social and economic infrastructure, education and skills, etc. as compared to urban settings are acute. In such a disadvantaged context, even community-based initiatives are limited.

He explained that the preparatory assistance (PA) phase of the programme (October 1998 to October 1999) aims at reinforcing on-going national efforts to understand the characteristics of the poor in Lebanon, strengthening the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop and implement a national programme for poverty reduction, and mobilizing needed financial resources.

The PA is undertaking in parallel two major activities.

First, It is implementing priority projects aimed at promoting income generation and job creation especially for women in rural areas of North Lebanon. Some projects are aimed at strengthening local government services and strengthening civil society organizations. The PA has solicited and reviewed 15 proposals for community based projects in North Lebanon (specifically, the cluster of Joumeh, Fneidek, and the neighborhood of Bab-El-Tabbaneh in Tripoli) from local community groups, NGOs, and municipalities in collaboration with the Social Development Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) in the region. Approval and implementation of projects expected in Summer and fall 99. The

three pilot areas were identified based on the findings of the Mapping of Living Conditions, a study carried out by UNDP and the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1997 based on the findings of the Population and Housing Survey of 1996, and a rapid field assessment conducted at the start of the project.

Mr. Nehme outlined that the approach adopted by the project often consists of establishing in the area or village target of the project intervention, a network of interest that groups the school teachers and project management), municipality, local community association and the cooperative therefore ensuring the involvement of all.

Second, the preparatory phase is preparing for two future interventions:

- one aimed at building the capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs to plan and monitor social development and issue related data. This would be done through setting-up the Ministry communication and computing infrastructure, training employees to use these technologies and building critical application. The latter aim at establishing a system of information and data sharing on beneficiaries, partners, projects, etc, that would improve service delivery processes and renders available to the on-line public information and data on social issues and social indicators available at the Ministry.
- The second intervention would be a regional development programme for the Ackar area to be implemented in the coming two years.

Mr. Nehmeh highlighted the importance of government intervention; no organization being able to fill the gap or substitute the role of public sector. Therefore, the necessity to invest in building capacity of local public sector institutions be it local government, municipalities, centers of specialized ministries such as the social development centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs or the health centers of the Ministry of Health, etc.

12. Mr. Adnan Milki from World Vision, also representing "Green Line" briefed the participants about the purpose and activities of Green Line, a scientific association for the preservation of the natural and cultural environment. Green Line is active in the field of environment conservation and is currently promoting agro-tourism especially in the area of Irsal where it also collaborates with the local community development association. It is also active in various other areas especially organic farming and environment preservation.

13. Mr. Milki then presented the activities of World Vision explaining that this NGO has been active in emergency and relief services during the war and shifted, in the post-

war area, to working for the development of rural areas therefore trying to fill gaps generated by the lack of government services and the stalled role of municipalities and local government.

World Vision adopted the approach of area development and is currently focusing on Bcharre area, North Lebanon, undertaking training of farmers on food processing techniques, facilitating marketing processes through promotion and the development of products identity (labels). World Vision also has a team of specialist delivering extension in the field. This is undertaken in close collaboration with the Ministry of agriculture.

Finally, the meeting was concluded by a discussion whereby the participants all agreed to the necessity of strengthening the capacity of government institutions; interventions and efforts by local community based associations, UN agencies projects, NGOs, and others all being constrained by the lack of any government schemes for area development and supportive government response.

**Annex 1: List of Participants**  
**Round Table Discussion - Wednesday July 28, 1999, 11:00 a.m.**

Name	Organization	Phone	Fax	E-mail
1 Nasser yasin	UNDP-MOSA Programme for Improving the Living Conditions of the Poor	01-867803 03-206796		nkyassin@cyberia.net.lb poverty@cyberia.net.lb
2 Adib Nehme		01-867803 03-566978		adib.n@cyberia.net.lb poverty@cyberia.net.lb
3 Ayman Abdallah	Cooperative of Housing Foundation/Community Development (CHF/CD)	01-853263 03-290117	01-853262	cdl@cyberia.net.lb
4 Tatal Hajj Dib		01-853263 03-292409	01-853263	
5 Jihad Sukkariah	Community Welfare & Development Association of Fakha	03-291488	01-377922	
6 Hassan Atwi	Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association	01-273423	01-557603	
7 Hussein Kheir El Din				
8 Kassem Al-Shab	Rural Community Development Association of Irsal	03-358654	08-240275	
9 Said Zahr	Mercy Corps International	03-359122	06-444474	
10 Nasser Fargani	UNDP/UNOPS development project of Baalbeck-Hemmel	08-373233 01-371123		
11 Shafiq Bani Hani		08-373233 01-371124		
12 Adnan Milki	World Vision	03-641174	04-401982	admelki@cyberia.net.lb
13 Solange Saade	FAO	05-924005	05-922128	faor-leb@drm.net.lb
14 Mohamad Gabr	UN-ESCWA Chief, Agriculture Section, Sectoral Issues & Policies Division	01-981301/311	01-981510/11/12	mgabr@escwa.org.lb
15 Lamia El Moubayed	UN-ESCWA Economic Affairs Officer, Agriculture Section	01-981301/311 03-659956		moubayed@cyberia.net.lb
16 Lara Geadah	UN-ESCWA Research Assistant, Agriculture Section	01-981301/311		lgeadah@escawa.org.lb

**ANNEX 4**  
**JEHAD AL-BINÀA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION PROJECTS LIST**

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## Project Implemented during the Period-1988-1996

<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Jehad Al-Binàa Development Association</b>
<b>Headquarter Address</b>	Beirut-Harit Horeik – Next to the Natinal Social Security Funds – Rotex Bldg. – 1 <sup>st</sup> F. P.O.Box: 24/153 Borj El-Barajneh Tel:01-273423 / 03-317325/6 Fax: 01-826688 E-mail: binaa@cyberia.net.lb
<b>Regional Offices</b>	Nabatieh (03-822331) – Baalbeck (03-833993)
<b>Name of Interviewee</b>	Mr. Ibrahim Ismail, General Director Mr. Hassan Ali Atwi, Agriculture Manager

### Vocational Training Activities

Conducted 8 courses in construction delivered to 200 participants, 3 courses in administration to 42 participants. In addition to 4 courses in mechanics and 3 courses in trade delivered to 28 and 15 students.

### Construction Projects

- (1) Reconstruction and rehabilitation of 15,000 damaged houses during the period 1988-1996.
- (2) Construction of 10 schools and rehabilitation of 24 others
- (3) Construction of 4 cultural centers and rehabilitation of 2 others
- (4) Construction of 2 hospitals and rehabilitation of 2 others
- (5) Construction of 7 multipurpose medical centers and rehabilitation of 2 others
- (6) Construction of 37 mosques and rehabilitation of 15 others
- (7) Construction of 8 shelters
- (8) Construction of 11 public halls (Hussayniah) and rehabilitation of 6 others
- (9) Construction of 1 cultural and religious institutes

### Water, Electrical and General Services

- (1) Distribution of potable water to 500,000 inhabitants of Beirut southern suburbs estimated to satisfy 42% of the needs (on-going).
- (2) Digging 57 artisanal wells and installing water pumps.
- (3) Construction of four water reservoirs.
- (4) Placing of 400 water tanks for potable water supply in the different neighbourhoods of the Beirut southern suburbs.
- (5) Installation of 5 electrical power stations and networks including four electrical stabilizers (capacity 100-160 K.W) and 25 electrical power stations (Capacity 250-500 K.W.).
- (6) Installation of 15,000 meters water networks.
- (7) Installation of 4,100 meters of high voltage electrical wires.



**Other services:**

- (1) Garbage disposal in southern Beirut suburbs (300 tons/day). The project has been going on for the last four years.
- (2) Maintenance and rehabilitation of and water and waste water networks. This activity has been going on for the last four years.
- (3) Awareness, seminars, workshops.
- (4) Sanitary activities and pest control
- (5) Publications and awareness concerning use of pesticides
- (6) Garbage trucks distribution
- (7) Fumigation of garbage disposal sites.

**Planned Future Projects (Year 2000)**

- (1) Reconstruction of war damages after Israeli aggression
- (2) Building two vocational training centers
- (3) Establishing an agricultural inputs selling point in Qana (South Lebanon)
- (4) Activities for the development of rural women
- (5) Environment awareness campaigns, workshops and projects
- (6) Construction of three schools
- (7) Construction of four multipurpose medical centers
- (8) Construction of ten mosques + public halls (Hussayniah)
- (9) Construction of two cultural centers
- (10) Construction of "Al-Sayidah Khaoula" Shrine (Baalbeck area).
- (11) Finishing the construction of "Al-Sayid Abbas Al-Mousawi" Shrine (Baalbeck area).