

Lebanon

Mid-Term Evaluation

Thematic window: Conflict Prevention and Peace Building

Programme Title: Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Northern Lebanon

Author: Sergio Lenci, Consultant

Prologue

The current mid-term evaluation report is part of the efforts being implemented by the Millennium Development Goal Secretariat (MDG-F), as part of its monitoring and evaluation strategy, to promote learning and to improve the quality of the 128 joint programs in 8 development thematic windows according to the basic evaluation criteria inherent to evaluation; relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

The aforementioned mid-term evaluations have been carried out amidst the backdrop of an institutional context that is both rich and varied, and where several UN organizations, working hand in hand with governmental agencies and civil society, cooperate in an attempt to achieve priority development objectives at the local, regional, and national levels. Thus the mid-term evaluations have been conducted in line with the principles outlined in the Evaluation network of the Development Assistant Committee (DAC) - as well as those of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). In this respect, the evaluation process included a reference group comprising the main stakeholders involved in the joint programme, who were active participants in decisions making during all stages of the evaluation; design, implementation, dissemination and improvement phase.

The analysis contained in the mid-term evaluation focuses on the joint program at its mid-term point of implementation- approximately 18 months after it was launched. Bearing in mind the limited time period for implementation of the programs (3 years at most), the mid-term evaluations have been devised to serve as short-term evaluation exercises. This has limited the scope and depth of the evaluation in comparison to a more standard evaluation exercise that would take much longer time and resources to be conducted. Yet it is clearly focusing on the utility and use of the evaluation as a learning tool to improve the joint programs and widely disseminating lessons learnt.

This exercise is both a first opportunity to constitute an independent "snapshot" of progress made and the challenges posed by initiatives of this nature as regards the 3 objectives being pursued by the MDG-F; the change in living conditions for the various populations vis-à-vis the Millennium Development Goals, the improved quality in terms of assistance provided in line with the terms and conditions outlined by the Declaration of Paris as well as progress made regarding the reform of the United Nations system following the "Delivering as One" initiative.

As a direct result of such mid-term evaluation processes, plans aimed at improving each joint program have been drafted and as such, the recommendations contained in the report have now become specific initiatives, seeking to improve upon implementation of all joint programs evaluated, which are closely monitored by the MDG-F Secretariat.

Conscious of the individual and collective efforts deployed to successfully perform this mid-term evaluation, we would like to thank all partners involved and to dedicate this current document to all those who have contributed to the drafting of the same and who have helped it become a reality (members of the reference group, the teams comprising the governmental agencies, the joint program team, consultants, beneficiaries, local authorities, the team from the Secretariat as well as a wide range of institutions and individuals from the public and private sectors). Once again, our heartfelt thanks.

The analysis and recommendations of this evaluation report do not necessarily reflect the views of the MDG-F Secretariat.

Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F)

Thematic Window on Conflict Prevention and Peace Building

CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING IN NORTHERN LEBANON

Mid term Evaluation

FINAL REPORT¹

¹ by Sergio Lenci, MDG-F Evaluation Consultant

Table of Content

	Page
Executive summary	iii
1 Background and objectives of the Evaluation	1
1.1. <i>The MDG-F and the Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Thematic Window</i>	
1.2. <i>Objectives of the Mid term evaluation</i>	
2 Scope and Methodology	2
2.1 <i>Analytical Framework</i>	
2.2 <i>- Data collection synthesis and analysis</i>	
2.3 <i>Limitations</i>	
2.4 <i>Structure of the Report</i>	
3. Context Overview and Description of the Joint Programme	3
3.1 <i>Context Overview</i>	
3.2 <i>Original Design and management arrangements</i>	
3.3 <i>Timeline of the Joint Programme</i>	
4. Analysis of the Joint Programme: Evaluation Criteria and Questions	9
4.1 <i>Delivery rates</i>	
4.2. <i>Substantive Progress Towards Expected Outcomes</i>	
4.3 <i>Analysis of Programme Design</i>	
4.4 <i>Analysis of the Implementation Process</i>	
5. Conclusions and Lessons Learnt	19
6. Recommendations	21
Annexes	
<i>I. ToR</i>	
<i>II. Documents Consulted</i>	
<i>III. Mission Agenda</i>	

Executive Summary

The MDG-F and the thematic window on conflict prevention and peace building

The MDG-F was established through a cooperation agreement between the Government of Spain and the UNDP, signed in December 2006 for a total of 528 million EUROS. In September 2008 an addendum to the agreement was signed for an additional 90 millions EUROS for a thematic window on child nutrition.

The 19 Programmes in this window seek to contribute to the achievement of 3 of main goals through interventions tackling conflict prevention and violence reduction, livelihood improvements against youth violence, and the fostering of dialog. These outcomes represent a variety of direct and indirect approaches to building peace and preventing conflicts. Many countries find themselves caught in a vicious circle of crisis, poverty and violence, which can fuel instability at all levels. Moreover, the development process may generate conflicts, as resources are allocated, national priorities redefined and new actors empowered. In this framework, addressing basic needs in terms of support initiatives to service provision and income generation with a “do no harm” approach is an important dimension of this thematic window and of its connection to the MDGs.

Objectives of the Midterm Evaluation

According to the Terms of Reference, this mid-term evaluation has the following specific objectives:

1. To discover the programme’s design quality and internal coherence (needs and problems it seeks to solve) and its external coherence with the UNDAF, the National Development Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals, and find out the degree of national ownership as defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.
2. To understand how the joint programme operates and assess the efficiency of its management model in planning, coordinating, managing and executing resources allocated for its implementation, through an analysis of its procedures and institutional mechanisms. This analysis will seek to uncover the factors for success and limitations in inter-agency tasks within the One UN framework.
3. To identify the programme’s degree of effectiveness among its participants, its contribution to the objectives of the PBCP thematic window, and the Millennium Development Goals at the local and/or country level.

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation adopts a mixed methods approach. Starting from a base of quantitative information, financial and substantive (financial delivery and goods or services delivered by the Programme), the evaluation collected qualitative data that help to understand why the activities implemented and the outputs delivered are contributing or not to the expected outcomes of the JP.

Data were collected using different techniques, including: a) desk review; b) semi structured interviews, and c) direct observation.

The data collected were organized in blocks of information corresponding to the three dimensions of analysis on which the evaluation is focused and, within that, the lines of inquiry identified in the inception report. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from different sources were triangulated at different stages in the interview process, and in the final synthesis of the data collected. In so doing, the evaluator could systematically analyze the different blocks of information and identify findings and conclusions that reflect an impartial assessment while responding to the evaluation objectives and questions.

Context overview

Lebanon is on track to achieve many of its MDG by 2015 and has made much progress since the end of the civil war in 1990. Nevertheless, over the last 6 years the country witnessed high political instability and a number of violent clashes including, but not limited to, a war with Israel and an internal armed conflict between the Lebanese Army the armed insurgent Fatah al Islam in a Palestinian refugee camp. These

events generated significant human and material losses. Lebanon may be resilient, but its social fabric is fragile and the hard-won national development gains are not equally distributed demographically or geographically. North Lebanon is a clear example of this. Tripoli City, Akkar/Minieh-Denneh, Jezzine/Saida and Hermel/Baalbek are home for two thirds of the extremely poor and half of the poor population despite the fact that they make up less than one third of the Lebanese population. Addressing these disparities is one of the key challenges for long lasting peace and this is what the JP aims to contribute to.

Key Findings

The evaluation confirmed the overall relevance of the Programme. Some of its components are well advanced and are beginning to yield some positive results, namely the youth component, the training of Palestinian Popular Committees and the socio economic initiatives in the Akkar region. However, the overall implementation is significantly delayed with respect to the original design and work plan. In fact, after 23 month the JP has not yet completed the activities planned for the first year of implementation. The total budget delivery rate of by the end of June 2011 was 94% of the first transfer and the actual disbursement over the same amount was 65.4% The interviews conducted during the country mission revealed a sense of frustration among some of the key stakeholders *vis a vis* the expectations raised in the initial phase. From this perspective, the implementation delay should be an issue of concern as it can potentially undermine the credibility of the Programme and its effectiveness in contributing to the expected outcomes, particularly as relates to sustainable conflict resolution mechanisms and processes. The factors that can explain this delay include a mix of design constraints, internal management issues and external political variables.

The evaluation also revealed that there is room for improvement in terms of more effective collective action on behalf of the UN organizations, so as to ensure greater coherence and maximize impact. Similarly, there is need for greater involvement of national and local counterparts in the strategic leadership of the Joint Programme and in coordinating operational activities, so as to enhance relevance, ownership and sustainability.

Recommendations

Considering that there are only seven months left for the implementation of the programme the evaluation proposes the following key recommendations:

1. It is recommended to ensure adequate leadership of State institutions in the strategic management of the Programme and participation of local actors in defining the content and methodology of operational activities, so as to enhance ownership and sustainability. This may require greater effort to implement the management arrangements in line with their original design.
2. It is recommended to take quick action in establishing the Lebanese Palestinian dialogue forums by gathering local stakeholders around the planning and implementation of tangible services to be delivered by the JP within the time and resources available. These Forums should be chaired by the LPDC to ensure the back up of national institutions and create enabling conditions for sustainability once the programme is over.
3. It is recommended not to endorse the revision of the Programme strategy regarding the Lebanese – Lebanese dialogue Forum, named “Tripoli Initiative”, and to reallocate the remaining funds for the provision of basic services in the area, in line with the original strategy. In this connection, the NSC should assess if the nature of the relations established so far with the local Government and other local stakeholders is conducive for effective collaboration and timely implementation of such strategy. Should the NSC find that the situation is not conducive, it is recommended to drop this component and focus the remaining resources under other outputs that could yield more tangible results within the time frame available. This would reduce the scope of the Programme but maximize the impact.

Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Northern Lebanon – MTE Final Report
20 September 2011

4. It is recommended to follow up on the existing agreement between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, so as to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the Civic Education Programme which is proving to be an effective peace building intervention.
5. It is recommended to pay more attention to exploring windows of opportunities for external coordination and complementarities, particularly as regards other local development programmes being implemented by the UN in the Akkar Region and infrastructural projects being funded in the Refugee Camps and surrounding areas by the European Commission, USAID and other donors. In so doing, the leadership of national institutions and the engagement of UN senior management will be instrumental to establish an adequate political framework for inter-institutional cooperation. Along the same line, it is recommended to optimize potential synergies with the Lebanon Recovery Fund and the Peace Building Fund.
6. It is recommended to start as soon as possible the implementation of the Advocacy and Communication Strategy focusing on raising awareness on the MDG and deconstructing the stereotyped image of Palestinians as a security risk. The implementation of these components should start immediately, without waiting for the approval of the new Labour law. Should the latter not be approved by Parliament, the corresponding segment of the communication strategy should be revised so as to reinforce the other components.
7. It is recommended that UN participating organizations in dialogue with their counterparts put more effort in ensuring that the activities related to gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed in the different programme components, based on a shared approach and methodology.
8. It is recommended to define a clear exit strategy for the socio economic component in Akkar. Such strategy should be developed and approved in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders, including ILO, UNDP, local authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture and the CDR, so as to make sure that it builds upon existing structures and mechanisms.
9. It is recommended to consider the possibility of a partial six months extension of the Programme, in case the deadline of March 2012 proves to be insufficient time to complete the planned activities, in particular: a) implement the demonstrative projects of the Strategic Plans for the Akkar region and b) implement the service delivery or infrastructure projects to be identified by the Dialogue Forums for inter and intra-community dialogue.
10. The extension should be issued under the following conditions: a) that the continuation of the activities does not imply further allocation of resources for salaries or honoraries of UN staff and consultants; b) that by December 2011 there is tangible substantive progress in the integration and functioning of the dialogue Forums, and in the implementation of the demonstrative projects in Akkar.

1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

1.1. The MDG-F and the thematic window on conflict prevention and peace building (CPPB)

The MDG-F was established through a cooperation agreement between the Government of Spain and the UNDP, signed in December 2006 for a total of 528 million EUROS. In September 2008 an addendum to the agreement was signed for an additional 90 millions EUROS for a thematic window on child nutrition.

The Fund is composed of eight thematic windows and it operates through Joint Programmes managed by the UN Country Teams, so as to enhance coherence and effectiveness of development interventions of the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes. So far 128 JP have been approved, in 49 different countries.

The 19 Programmes in this window seek to contribute to the achievement of 3 of main goals through interventions tackling conflict prevention and violence reduction, livelihood improvements against youth violence, and the fostering of dialogue. These outcomes represent a variety of direct and indirect approaches to building peace and preventing conflicts. Many countries find themselves caught in a vicious circle of crisis, poverty and violence, which can fuel instability at all levels. Moreover, the development process may generate conflicts, as resources are allocated, national priorities redefined and new actors empowered. In this framework, addressing basic needs in terms of support initiatives to service provision and income generation with a “do no harm” approach is an important dimension of this thematic window and of its connection to the MDGs.

1.2. Objectives of the mid term evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation strategy of the MDG-F Secretariat and the JP Implementation Guidelines prescribe that every JP with a duration of 2 years or more will be subject to a mid term evaluation. The latter is conceived as formative evaluation, aiming to improve programme implementation during its second phase.

The mid term evaluation will consist of a systematic and relatively rapid assessment of the design, the implementation process and the emerging outcomes of the JP. The evaluation will try to identify and analyse the internal and external factors that are affecting the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the intervention. In this connection, the evaluation will focus on the ownership of the Joint Programme by national and local stakeholders and on the extent to which the participating UN organization have been able to operate in a coherent framework so as to enhance coordination and synergy. In so doing, the evaluation will also try to identify some good practices that could be applied to other programmes in similar contexts.

According to the Terms of Reference, this mid-term evaluation has the following specific objectives:

1. To discover the programme's design quality and internal coherence (needs and problems it seeks to solve) and its external coherence with the UNDAF, the National Development Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals, and

- find out the degree of national ownership as defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.
2. To understand how the joint programme operates and assess the efficiency of its management model in planning, coordinating, managing and executing resources allocated for its implementation, through an analysis of its procedures and institutional mechanisms. This analysis will seek to uncover the factors for success and limitations in inter-agency tasks within the One UN framework.
 3. To identify the programme's degree of effectiveness among its participants, its contribution to the objectives of the CPPB thematic window, and the Millennium Development Goals at the local and/or country level.

With these objectives, the evaluation was commissioned by the MDG-F Secretariat and conducted by an independent consultant between April and July 2011.

2. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Analytical Framework

The basic unit of analysis of the evaluation is the Joint Programme in connection with: a) the country context; b) the MDG and the general objectives of the MDG-F thematic window on CPPB c) the UN reform process.

Along this line, the basic unit is articulated in three dimensions of analysis: a) the programme design; b) the implementation process and c) the contribution to development change related to the MDG and the CPPB thematic window, including unanticipated outcomes, positive or negative.

2.2. Data collection, synthesis and analysis

This evaluation adopts a mixed methods approach. Starting from a base of quantitative information, financial and substantive (financial delivery and goods or services delivered by the Programme), the evaluation collected qualitative data that help to understand why the activities implemented and the outputs delivered are contributing or not to the expected outcomes of the JP. In this connection the analysis of the JP design and implementation process has been factored in to explain the progress made and the challenges faced by the JP.

Data were collected using a variety of methods, including: a) desk review; b) consultation with stakeholders and c) direct observation.

a) Desk review

The desk review mainly covered the following documents: policy, strategy and programming documents; progress reports and other monitoring tools; relevant previous evaluations or studies; selected projects outputs, such as publication studies, plans etc., minutes from coordination meetings and updated financial data.

b) Consultation with Stakeholders

Consultation with stakeholders occurred mainly through in depth, semi structured interviews with qualified informants. In addition, at the beginning of the in country mission the evaluator conducted a focus groups with the Evaluation Reference Group,

and later on other focus groups with the Palestinian Popular Committees of Nahar el Bared and Beddawi refugee camps, and with two regional working groups which are part of the management structure of the JP.

c) Direct Observation

During the field mission the evaluator visited selected sites of programme implementation, including refugee camps, urban neighbourhoods in Tripoli and the Municipalities of Mohamra. Although in a relatively rapid fashion, the evaluator was able to observe the “field” in which the programme is being implemented so as to better understand the contextual factors that may influence the implementation of the JP and the achievement of results.

The data collected were organized in blocks of information corresponding to the three dimensions of analysis on which the evaluation is focused and, within that, the lines of inquiry identified in the inception report. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from different sources were triangulated at different stages in the interview process, and in the final synthesis of the data collected. In so doing, the evaluator could systematically analyze the different blocks of information and identify findings and conclusions that reflect an impartial assessment while responding to the evaluation objectives and questions.

2.3 Limitations

The major limitation to this evaluation has to do with the breadth and depth of the analysis related to the contribution to the MDG. Although the contribution to development change represents the ultimate goal of the joint programmes, it should be clarified that, by definition, a mid term evaluation cannot assess consolidated outcomes, as it would be premature at this stage; it rather tries to identify and analyse emerging or potential outcomes that should be further assessed in the final evaluation.

2.4 Structure of the report

A descriptive section and an analytical one follow the introductory section of the report. The descriptive section lays out the empirical ground for the analysis. It illustrates the initial programme design, the intervention logic and the institutional arrangements for the management of the Programme. It also includes a timeline with the key facts that have somehow marked the implementation process.

The analytical section, based on the key evaluation questions, starts with the analysis of the JP substantive progress followed by the analysis of the programme design and the implementation process that helps to explain the progress made or lack of. The report ends with a set of conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt.

3. CONTEXT OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME

3.1. Context overview

According to the situation analysis included in the Programme document of the JP, Lebanon is on track to achieve many of its MDG goals by 2015, and has made much progress since the end of the civil war in 1990. Yet, in the last five years alone:

- Nine political figures have been assassinated (including former Prime Minister, Rafic Hariri)
- The 2006 July war with Israel killed more than 1,000 people and displaced 25% of the country's population, causing GDP to drop -5%.

- In May - August 2007 an armed conflict took place between the Lebanese Army and the armed insurgent “Fatah al Islam” in a Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon. 500 people were killed and 40,000 were internally displaced.
- Between November 2007 and May 2008, the election of a new President was postponed 19 times and Parliament did not meet in over one year, blocking progress on economic, social and political reforms.
- On May seven 2008, tensions between the two main political factions renewed and erupted into armed hostilities with around 60 people killed in Beirut and in the countryside.
- Between May and August 2008 armed conflict clashes took place between Sunny and Alawite communities in Tripoli City, north Lebanon.
- Elections took place in June 2009 and the new Government was installed in November of the same year
- The Government collapsed in January 2011 and new Ministries were still being appointed at the time of the evaluation, in July 2011.
- In June 2011 violent armed clashes erupted again in the city of Tripoli, with 15 people killed.

These facts can give an idea of the instability of the situation. Lebanon may be resilient but its social fabric is fragile and the hard-won national development gains are not equally distributed demographically or geographically. North Lebanon is a clear example of this. Tripoli City, Akkar/Minieh-Denneh, Jezzine/Saida and Hermel/Baalbek are home for two thirds of the extremely poor and half of the poor population despite the fact that they make up less than one third of the Lebanese population. Addressing these disparities is one of the key challenges for long lasting peace and this is what the JP aims to contribute to.

3.2 Original Design and management arrangements

The JP *Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in North Lebanon* (from now on also referred to as “the Programme”) was approved in March 2009, the PRODOC was signed in April and the funds for the first year of implementation were released on September 3rd 2009, the latter being the official starting date of the Programme. The original duration of the Programme was 24 months; however, in order to compensate the delay in the initial phase of implementation the Programme was granted a six month no cost extension. The closure of the Programme is therefore estimated in March 2012.

The JP involves six different organizations of the United Nations with a total approved budget of 5,000,000.00 USD distributed as follow:

Table 1: Total Budget by UN Organization (including 7% administrative costs for each organization)		
<i>Organization</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>UNDP</i>	2,533,984	50.3%
<i>UNFPA</i>	473,361	9.6%
<i>UNICEF</i>	684,820	13.9%
<i>UNRWA</i>	256,867	5.2%
<i>ILO</i>	876,539	17.8%
<i>UNESCO</i>	154,429	3.1%
TOTAL	5,000,000	100%

Source: Revised PRODOC signed cover page.

The greatest portion of the budget (50.03%) is allocated to UNDP, but the Programme is implemented under the leadership of the Office of the Resident Coordinator (RCO) of the UN system in Lebanon, so as to enhance interagency harmonization and synergy.

As stated in the PRODOC, the main objective of the JP is to mitigate the risk of relapse into violent conflict through promotion of socio-economic development and peace building in conflict sensitive communities in North Lebanon, with a particular focus on Lebanese-Palestinian relations. In this connection, the Programme aims to support the Lebanese national agenda through creating better institutional dialogue mechanisms, promoting participation and civic empowerment as well as strengthening civil society, in particular by involving youth and women as agents of change, regardless of affiliation or religious confession.

The specific objectives of the Programme are: i) Identification and promotion of sustainable conflict prevention tools to facilitate resolution of inter and intra communal tensions between Palestinian and Lebanese communities; II) Implementation of equitable socio-economic development interventions decreasing the divide amongst the communities and III) Promotion of youth and women's empowerment through active participation in local development and peace building.

The targeted areas of intervention include the following: i) Nahar el bared and Beddawi Palestinian refugee camps and their surrounding Lebanese population; ii) Marginalised border communities in Akkar area; iii) Jabal Mohsen and Bab al Tebbeneh neighbourhoods in Tripoli.

The original strategy of the Programme included a number of infrastructural projects for social service delivery in the selected Palestinian refugee camps and in the selected neighbourhoods of Tripoli. By the same token, support to participatory planning and to the implementation of concrete socioeconomic initiatives was at the core of the JP intervention strategy in the Akkar region. The assumption was that assessing needs and delivering tangible goods or services through a participatory process that involves the different local stakeholders could be an effective way to reduce tensions and rearticulate the social fabric, on the basis of cooperation for the satisfaction of common needs at intra and inter community level. These strategic components² make up for almost 60% of the programme budget and constitute the core of the JP peace building approach and working hypothesis. As a corollary to this hypothesis, the JP design included a set of activities aiming at promoting a culture of peace and mutual respect among children and youth from different Lebanese and Palestinian communities and religious background. Finally, the JP includes an institutional strengthening component aiming to support the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) in its coordination role, as the national institutional platform for Palestinian issues in Lebanon.

The logic of intervention of the JP is articulated in two main expected outcomes and 9 expected outputs. Table 2 below illustrates the allocation of programme resources by outcome and output

² In the results framework they correspond to outputs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3

Table 2.		
Results framework with resource allocation by outcome and output		
Expected Outcome	Expected Output	Resource allocation
1. Conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms developed and sustained in order to facilitate the resolution of inter and intra communal tensions between Palestinians and Lebanese	1.1 Role of informal Lebanese-Palestinian resolution mechanisms and Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) Strengthened	244,000.00
	1.2 Four forums in support of community based conflict resolution and social service delivery initiatives in selected areas of intervention established and operational	1,076,000.00
	1.3. Culture of peace, human rights and gender mainstreaming capacities of women committees of the targeted areas strengthened.	367,000.00
	1.4. Conflict resolution capacities of youth and NGO/CBO working with youth in the selected areas improved	883,000.00
	1.5. Capacities of the Popular Committees improved, particularly with regard to conflict resolution methods	178,000.00
	1.6 A Media Campaign to Raise Lebanese-Palestinian Issues, Conducted	38,000.00
	Subtotal outcome 1	
2. Conflict risk in North Lebanon reduced through the design and implementation of inclusive socio-economic initiatives	2.1 Local stakeholders' capacities in 15 communities strengthened in the areas of inclusive local governance and social development planning	227,000.00
	2.2. Local Socio-Economic Development Plans Developed for the three sub-regions (Sahel, High and Mid-Dreib)	255,000.00
	2.3. Socio-Economic initiatives implemented in the three targeted sub-regions (Sahel, Mid and High Dreib)	919,000.00
Sub total outcome 2		1,401,000.00
TOTAL		4,187,000.00

Source: PRODOC, Results Framework.

The national counterparts of the Programme are the following: *Council for Development and Reconstruction* (CDR), responsible for all local development projects in Lebanon and main Governmental counterpart of the JP; *Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee* (LPDC), which deals with the Lebanese –Palestinian political dialogue; Nahr el Bared Camp (NBC), and the Reconstruction and Recovery Cell (RRC) of the Prime Minister Office.

The United Nations and the Government of Lebanon jointly govern the Programme, although the participating UN Agencies directly execute it through implementing partners. The political and strategic leadership of the Programme rests with the National Steering Committee (NSC). The latter is co-chaired by the representative of the Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and the UN Resident Coordinator and is integrated by a representative of the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID). To ensure coherence and operational synergies among the partners involved, the JP also counts with a Programme Management Committee (PMC). The PMC is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and integrated by the Recovery and Development Unit of the Prime Minister's Office, the National

Commission for Lebanese Women, the LPDC, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor, the Palestinian Embassy and the six UN Agencies involved in the Programme.

The responsibility for coordinating the implementation of activities rests with the Joint Programme Manager, who is hired by the participating UN Agencies and sits in the UN Resident Coordinator Office. According to the PRODOC, at the field level the Programme Coordinator will take overall responsibility for oversight of the project and for guiding the work of the different UN Agencies in accordance with the agreed timeline at field level, ensuring that a comprehensive and integrated inter-sectoral approach is respected. The individual Agencies take on the actual implementation and financial responsibility of each relevant component and report directly to the Programme Coordinator. The latter is also responsible for liaising with the local community and the funding agency and will ultimately report directly to the UN Resident Coordinator Office. It is worth noting that in order to improve the coordination efforts, the UN Agencies involved in the Programme approved a joint budget to implement common activities, which is managed by the UNRC Office.

In order to facilitate coordination at the field level, the JP has also established the following mechanisms:

- Five Regional Working Groups (RWG) representing local stakeholders in targeted areas. This is the space where Municipalities and civil society organization are more involved in decision-making at the technical level.
- Bi-weekly field coordination meetings
- Joint field visits by the UN Agencies
- Joint field office, located in the UN RC sub-office in Tripoli.

In accordance with the overall MDG-F management arrangements, the Programme funds are disbursed using the “pass through” modality with UNDP as the Administrative Agent (AA) at Head Quarters level. Once the funds are disbursed, each organization keeps programmatic and financial responsibility according to their administrative norms and procedures.

3.3 Timeline of the Joint Programme

The box below presents a sequence of the main facts that marked the history of the JP, from the outset until July 2011, when the evaluation mission took place.

Box 1. Joint Programme Timeline	
<i>14 January 2009:</i>	<i>First NSC meeting</i>
<i>21 April 2009:</i>	<i>Signature of JP Documents</i>
<i>3 September 2009:</i>	<i>Official start date (funds transfer)</i>
<i>19 November 2009:</i>	<i>NSC meeting</i>
<i>1 December 2009:</i>	<i>Recruitment of UNRWA Field Officer</i>
<i>December 2009:</i>	<i>First MDG-F Secretariat monitoring mission</i>
<i>10 February 2010:</i>	<i>Inception workshop</i>
<i>31 March 2010:</i>	<i>First PMC meeting</i>
<i>1 April 2010:</i>	<i>Programme Coordinator on board</i>
<i>19 April 2010:</i>	<i>Recruitment of UNFPA Project Manager</i>
<i>April-November 2010:</i>	<i>Institutional mapping & socio-economic desk review on Akkar area</i>
<i>15 May 2010:</i>	<i>Recruitment of ILO Project Manager</i>
<i>23 May 2010:</i>	<i>Municipal Elections in North Lebanon</i>
<i>28 July 2010:</i>	<i>First RWG meeting in NBC/BC area</i>
<i>July-September 2010:</i>	<i>Conduction of conflict analysis in Akkar area</i>

Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Northern Lebanon – MTE Final Report
20 September 2011

<i>11 August 2010:</i>	<i>Recruitment of UNDP Tebbaneh-Jabal Mohsen Field Officer</i>
<i>15 September 2010:</i>	<i>RWG meeting in Tripoli (first and only)</i>
<i>17 September 2010:</i>	<i>PMC meeting</i>
<i>18 November 2010:</i>	<i>Final identification of Olives and Vegetables sectors in Akkar</i>
<i>29 November 2010:</i>	<i>Second MDG-F Secretariat monitoring mission</i>
<i>December 2010</i>	<i>Study on interfaces between Lebanese and Palestinians completed</i>
<i>15 December 2010:</i>	<i>First RWG meeting in Akkar</i>
<i>12 January 2011:</i>	<i>Resignation of Lebanese Government</i>
<i>January – March 2011:</i>	<i>Revision of JP documents (Communication & Advocacy Plan, Monitoring System, and Joint Work Plan)</i>
<i>20 April 2011:</i>	<i>PMC meeting (endorsed revised documents)</i>
<i>May 2011</i>	<i>Case Study on NBC relations disseminated</i>
<i>14 June 2011:</i>	<i>New Lebanese Government takes possession</i>
<i>24 June 2011:</i>	<i>Violent clashes in Bab el Tebbaneh-Jabal Mohsen</i>
<i>18-26 July 2011</i>	<i>Mid term Evaluation Mission</i>
<i>26 July 2011</i>	<i>NSC Meeting</i>

Source: JP Coordination Unit

Among the key facts, it is worth highlighting that the NSC met in November 2009 at the beginning of the JP and a second time in July 2011. The inception workshop for the launching of the JP with the national and local counterparts and beneficiaries took place in February 2010, six month after the transfer of the funds, and the JP Coordinator was hired in April 2010, one year after the signing of the Programme Document and seven month after the first transfer of funds. The first PMC meeting was held in March 2010, and after that it met two more times: in September of the same year and in April 2011 to endorse the revision of the JP document. Of the five Regional Working Groups, that were supposed to function as the technical coordination body on the ground, only three were actually established. The first RWG ever was held at the end of July 2010, almost one year after the funds were received and the RWG in Tripoli only met once, in September 2010.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME: EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

4.1. Delivery rates

Overall, the delivery rates reflect a significant delay in budget execution. Having almost concluded the second year of implementation, the JP has not yet disbursed, nor committed the total amount planned and transferred for the first year. By the end of June 2011, the total delivery rate is 84% of the amount transferred. Out of this total, 59% is disbursed while the remaining 25% represents commitments³ to activities yet to be implemented. Table 3 presents the details rates by results:

Table 3.

Budget Delivery by results up to 30 June 2011 over transfer to date

<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Expected Output</i>	<i>Amount transferred to date</i>	<i>% Disbursed</i>	<i>%Committed⁴</i>
1. Conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms developed and sustained in order to facilitate the resolution of inter and intra communal tensions between Palestinians and Lebanese	1.1 Role of informal Lebanese-Palestinian resolution mechanisms and Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) Strengthened	182,525	32%	92%
	1.2 Three forums in support of community based conflict resolution and social service delivery initiatives in selected areas of intervention established and operational	420,000	60%	96%
	1.3. Culture of peace, human rights and gender mainstreaming capacities of women committees of the targeted areas strengthened.	162,206	64%	64%
	1.4. Conflict resolution capacities of youth and NGO/CBO working with youth in the selected areas improved	682,622	70%	96%
	1.5. Capacities of the Popular Committees improved, particularly with regard to conflict resolution methods	97,943	55%	57%
	1.6 A Media Campaign to Raise Lebanese-Palestinian Issues, Conducted	30,000	0%	0%
Subtotal outcome 1		1,575,296	60%	88%
2. Conflict risk in North Lebanon reduced through the design and implementation of inclusive socio-economic initiatives	2.1 Local stakeholders' capacities in 15 communities strengthened in the areas of inclusive local governance and social development planning	97,828	85%	85%
	2.2. Local Socio-Economic Development Plans Developed for the three sub-regions (Sahel, High and Mid-Dreib)	214,570	60%	84%
	2.3. Socio-Economic initiatives implemented in the three targeted sub-regions (Sahel, Mid and High Dreib)	600,615	48%	71%
Sub total outcome 2		913,013	55%	75%
Coordination Support		125,105	55%	135.7%
TOTAL		2,336,447.00	59%	84%

Source: JP Coordination Unit

³ It should be noted that the notion of “commitment” has different meanings for different Agencies. For some it means having entered into a legal obligation by signing a contract with a provider of goods or services, for others it simply reflects a budget allocation even without a legal obligation. Each participating Agency has provided data to the JP coordination unit according to its own understanding and no distinction is made in the data provided in the official JP progress reports and in this evaluation report

⁴ This category includes all amounts committed and disbursed over the amount transferred to date and is assumed as the official delivery rate.

Disbursement by output gives an idea of how much has actually been done already. The outputs showing the highest disbursement are those related to building a culture of peace among youth, through school training and extra curricular activities; these are outputs 1.3 and 1.4. The output related to the planning of socio economic initiatives in Akkar (2.1) also show higher disbursement rates. The lowest rates are to be found in the outputs related to building conflict resolution mechanisms through social service delivery and support to LPDC and the Palestinian popular committees. Finally, the communication component has not yet started the implementation.

Delivery rates by agency during the same period confirm the scenario reflected in the data by results. The agencies that are more directly involved in the youth component and socio economic initiatives are showing the highest disbursement rates: UNICEF has disbursed 100%; UNESCO and ILO are between 69% and 82%. On the other hand, the agencies more directly involved in outputs related to conflict resolution mechanisms and social service delivery are showing the lowest rates: UNDP 41% and UNRWA 40%. UNFPA, which is mostly working on gender equality, is somewhere in between with a disbursement rate of 62%. Interestingly, while UNDP and ILO have already committed at least another 30%, the data do not show any further commitment for UNRWA and UNFPA in addition to what has already been disbursed. Table 3 illustrate the detailed data by agency:

Agency	UNDP	ILO	UNESCO	UNICEF	UNRWA	UNFPA	TOTAL
% Disbursed	41%	82%	69%	100%	39%	62%	59%
% Committed	78%	114%	93%	100%	40%	62%	84%

Source: JP Coordination Unit

The delay in budget execution is explained by a number of external and internal factors, including design flaws and implementation issues that will be discussed later in the report. However, delivery rates should not be necessarily taken as an indicator of substantive progress or lack of, unless analysed in connection with other quantitative and qualitative data and in the framework of expected outcomes. The next section provides this type of analysis

4.2. Substantive Progress Towards Expected Outcomes

The analysis that follows focuses on emerging outcomes and key outputs, identifying critical factors and as they can be evidenced by the available documentation and the interviews conducted.

OUTCOME 1: *Conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms developed and sustained in order to facilitate the resolution of inter and intra communal tensions between Palestinians and Lebanese.*

The evaluation confirmed that the greatest quantitative and qualitative progress under this expected outcome is to be found in the youth component and in the training of the Palestinian Popular Committees.

Reportedly, the Programme has worked so far with a total of 2,283 students (991 Palestinians and 1,292 Lebanese) and is contributing to generate positive changes in the participants' attitude towards conflict resolution and in their perception of cultural diversity as something that should not be assumed as a threat to one's own values and identity. According to the narrative reports and to the interviews conducted, a considerable number of targeted Lebanese students are becoming more socially interactive and capable of building new relationships with others; they seem to be more prone to working in groups and connecting with each other with fewer preconceived ideas. Even the most rigid young boys, who had stereotypical ideas about different communities, are now reported to be more tolerant of their peers from other areas. This change in perception and behavior was also reflected during the last riots that recently took place in Tripoli, where a large number of students refused to take part in the demonstration, as they did not identify with it. The schools' Director interviewed during the evaluation mission confirmed these positive contributions of the JP. The evaluator also had the opportunity to witness one of the extra curricular activities in which youth from different cultural and religious background were positively interacting with each other. In order to enhance sustainability, the JP is now focusing on training teachers, in partnership with the Ministry of Education who intends to mainstream the Civic Education training in the official curricula of primary and secondary schools.

As for the Palestinian participants, progress is reported in terms of greater openness of the students in sharing with the trainers their traumatic experiences during the NBC conflict, and this is considered an important step towards the possibility of resolving these traumas. Although very relevant and needed, the implementation of training activities in UNRWA schools has not been as smooth as in the Lebanese schools. The consultation with stakeholders, including schools' teachers and directors, Palestinian Popular Committees, the regional working group, UN agencies and implementing partner revealed some tensions regarding the content and methodology of the training that may influence its effectiveness. The issue of greater concern seems to be the cultural pertinence of some of the activities, including the very title of the Programme. In fact, the notion of "peace building" has different meanings for the stakeholders. In the Palestinian Refugee Camps the word "peace" is not an abstract notion of harmonious relations with the other, but recalls immediately the international agenda for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict and, in particular, the settlement over the Palestinian occupied territories. As such, it is not a politically neutral word. In fact, the very idea of peace building and conflict resolution training initially generated certain suspicion and resistance in the targeted Palestinian communities. Moreover, issues have been raised regarding the methodology for delivering the training, the staff involved and the scheduling of the activities, which according to some interviewees did not always fit well in the cultural context and institutional curriculum.

The stakeholders interviewed had different perceptions regarding the facts that may have generated these concerns and the responsibilities involved. However, the key point that the evaluation revealed is the challenge in establishing a more cooperative relation among the schools, the students and their parents, the Participating UN organizations and the implementing partner. This challenge relates in part to the cultural diversity and political sensitivity that adds complexity to the context, but it also relates to issues of internal communication within the Joint Programme. For example, communication between UNRWA field office and its Head Quarter and between the latter and UNICEF the implementing partner and their local counterparts could have been more fluid. This

might have resulted in better timing and scheduling of the activities. Moreover, greater participation of schoolteachers, school directors and of the parents in designing the Programme and defining the content and methodology of the activities may have benefited the effectiveness of the training and resulted in greater local ownership and commitment.

While facing these challenges, UNRWA staff working in the field was able to effectively manage the situation and establish a relation of trust with the community, thus becoming the entry point into the Camps and the interface with the JP. This dynamic had a positive impact on the youth component and on the adult training. The Popular Committees no longer perceive the JP as part of an external agenda being imposed on them. They are now acknowledging the relevance and utility of the training received and are demanding for more training on specific subjects of their interest.

The other key component related to this outcome is the establishment of the dialogue forums, which are at the core of the JP peace building approach. These include two forums for Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue, and one for Lebanese – Lebanese Dialogue. The evaluation revealed that the work related to this component, which absorbs the majority of the Programme budget, has not really taken off yet.

To prepare the establishment of the Lebanese Palestinian dialogue forum the Programme has commissioned three studies: one focusing on the existing relations and interfaces between Palestinian and Lebanese communities, one case study focusing on the NBC camp and another one on the BC Camps. The study on relations and interfaces was completed in December 2010, the case study on NBC was disseminated in May 2011 and the case study on Beddawi has not been completed yet, or at least not disseminated or made available to the evaluator. These activities are necessary in order to compensate some design constraints regarding the analysis of the context and to define the most appropriate methodology of intervention. However, by themselves they do not fully explain the delay in implementation. In fact, the amount of time that they absorbed seems disproportional *vis a vis* the duration of the JP and the outputs produced.

There are long spans of inaction before and after each of the studies, and so far there is no evidence of them being used for their purpose: i.e. defining an appropriate methodology of intervention. The Terms of Reference of the dialogue Forums are yet to be proposed by UNDP to LPDC, UNRWA and local stakeholders. Little or no action has been taken so far to involve the Lebanese Municipalities: a Major interviewed by the evaluator did not know anything about the Forums. The only thing he could recall was that someone approached him a year before announcing that the JP would have funded infrastructural projects to serve the Municipality and the refugee Camp, but no other communication was received after this visit. On the Palestinian side, some preliminary discussion was held to define the integration of the Forums, but the process is still at an abstract level. The interviews conducted revealed that by not fulfilling the expectation raised in the inception workshop, the JP is losing credibility and is indirectly affecting the image of neutrality of the United Nations in the Country. In fact, people is wondering why is the UN delivering tangible socio economic projects in Akkar, while in the Palestinian camps they do not go beyond training and discussions on the notions of peace and conflict resolution. These facts suggest that there might be room for improvement in terms of more efficient task management by the UN and greater concern about the need to follow up with local partners to keep them abreast of the evolving process and avoid frustration.

The work related to the Lebanese-Lebanese dialogue Forum, addressing the tensions between the neighborhoods of Jabal Moshen and Bab al Tebbeneh in Tripoli, suffered a major strategic and operational shift. In fact, the peace building approach moved away from the idea of using the planning and delivery of social services as the catalytic element to set up and progressively consolidate a local dialogue forum. The new approach, named “The Tripoli Initiative”, moved towards a process of political analysis of the local conflict against the backdrop of the geopolitical regional dynamics. Reportedly, UNDP and its implementing partner supported the convening of a group of key local leaders (named the Convenors Group) to develop a conflict analysis, conduct a SWOT exercise and identify safety and peace assets for the city of Tripoli; these activities are conceived as instrumental to determine a strategy for the Convenors to mobilize political and social capital able to address the situation in Tripoli from a local, national and regional perspective. As valid as it might be from a conceptual point of view, the new approach does not fit within the nature of the JP, nor within the timeframe and resources allocated to it. This component is not delivering any concrete benefit to the local population within a visible horizon of time and does not seem to have a clearly identified road map, beside a generic strategic note that does not define a work plan nor a time frame for implementation. In so doing, the initiative seems delinked from the MDG agenda. Finally, the secret approach adopted in managing the initiative contributed to further isolate this component from the rest of the Programme; in fact, no information regarding the progress and dynamics of the Tripoli initiatives was shared with the NSC or PMC members.

Another critical component of the JP efforts to create a more conducive environment for peaceful relations among Palestinian and Lebanese communities is the support provided to the LPDC. The JP is supporting the salaries of a technical team operational in the north of Lebanon, with a contribution that reportedly corresponds to approximately 15% of the LPDC budget. In addition, the JP provided technical assistance and policy advisory to define the institutional strategic plan. These are important contributions that enhance the operational capacity of LPDC. However, the evaluation revealed that the institutional support is not plugging in with other initiatives of the JP, which relate to other institutions such as the Ministry of Labour or the Ministry of Education. According to the interviews conducted, there is a missed opportunity to support the role of LPDC as an inter-institutional platform mandated to coordinate policies and programmes related to Lebanese Palestinian relations. In this connection, the JP could arguably play an important role by stimulating greater participation in its governing bodies and using them as spaces for inter-institutional dialogue, rather than only for reporting on Programme activities.

Regarding the Palestinian Labour rights, the JP has worked to develop a partnership with the Ministry of Labour to support the implementation of the amendments to new the Labour Law approved by the national Parliament in August 2010. This component has been delayed by the collapse of the national Government in January 2011 and the JP is planning to reengage the new Minister once in place. In this connection, the JP developed a communication strategy that includes partnering with media, schools and education professional, local governments and citizens groups, so as to raise awareness around MDG related issues, contribute to changing stereotyped images of Palestinians as a security risk and enhance a culture of peace. The implementation of this strategy is conditioned by the engagement with the new Ministry and it has not started yet.

Outcome 2: *Conflict risk in North Lebanon reduced through the design and implementation of inclusive socio-economic initiatives*

Based on a preliminary phase of cross cutting analysis of a conflict assessment and a socio economic assessment of the Akkar region, the JP set up a participatory process of local development planning. In so doing, it established Local Economic Forums to discuss strategic and technical issues and prevent potential conflicts for the access to productive assets and resources. The forums include local government authorities, farmers associations and other civil society organizations. While they exist *de facto*, they are still be legally formalized.

With training and technical support of UNDP and ILO the Forums produced two Strategic Plans identifying the sectors of olives and vegetables as strategic areas of intervention. The Plans, after the validation of local stakeholders are now about to be implemented through the financing of demonstrative community projects and a revolving microcredit fund for individual projects. The microcredit fund is being administered by a Lebanese organization specializing in this field, which also provided training to participants on business planning and management, as precondition for accessing the fund. This organization also assumed the formal commitment to continue administering and issuing the credit once the JP is over.

The interviews conducted confirmed the commitment of local authorities and farmers' organizations and of The Ministry of Agriculture. The latter, while officially endorsing the initiative is demanding grater participation in directing the activities so as to make sure that they fit well in the national priority and strategies for the agricultural sector

Although delayed with respect to the initial timeframe of the JP and its original work plan, this component is now well underway and is resulting in a positive process of inclusive participation and a good practice of effective synergy between UNDP and ILO. The challenge is now to deliver on the commitments made within the timeframe available, which should not exceed March 2012, unless further extension is issued to the JP. Another issue of concern relates to the sustainability of the Economic Forums as permanent dialogue mechanisms. At this stage, the evaluation could not find a clear exit strategy that ensures a smooth transfer of responsibilities to local Government authorities.

Gender mainstreaming

Women's empowerment and gender equality was supposed to be a cross cutting issue. However, the evaluation could not find a comprehensive strategy or a shared methodology to mainstream the gender approach through out the different programme components. As a matter of fact, it became an output in itself and is being implemented as a separate set of activities.

The first year and a half of implementation was spent in assessing needs through a survey that run parallel to the other context analysis and assessments conducted by the JP. Based on this survey, a number of training needs where identified, including reproductive health, gender based violence and counselling, among others. So far the Programme delivered a limited number of training sessions aiming at improving the capacity of health providers on issues of reproductive health. In addition, the Programme

delivered also training workshop for a group of youth peer educators who are members of the Youth to Youth network (Y-PEER) and belonging to local NGOs and Palestinian camps. The workshop was intended to further develop their capacities on gender equality and equity. The youth peer educators delivered outreach sessions on gender equality during the summer camps organized by UNICEF for youth from Tebbaneh – Jabal Mohsen and Palestinian camps. This is a progress towards better integration and mainstreaming of the gender component through out the JP, although there still seem to be room for improvement along this line.

In fact, the interviews conducted in the field confirmed the relevance of the training under the gender component and its contribution in enhancing the participants' knowledge on the subject matter. However, at the same time they revealed that these activities are not being inserted into local processes already underway. For instance, civil society organizations providing free health care to different communities in marginal areas of Tripoli were consulted ad hoc to support the programme in identifying a selected number of participants, but were not involved in jointly defining a comprehensive intervention strategy with a more sustainable approach. One of them explicitly asked to define a long-term cooperation scheme capitalizing on their experience and commitment, but the JP does not seem to have followed up so far on this matter.

4.3. Analysis of Programme Design

The interviews conducted during the evaluation mission confirmed the relevance of the Programme to the country. From the perspective of national and local stakeholders, the peace building approach that combines training components with support to dialogue processes, structured around the planning and implementation of social service delivery and socioeconomic initiatives is considered appropriate. The JP is in line with the objectives of the UNDAF and of the PB&CP thematic window, which aims at contributing to step out of the vicious circle of poverty, crises and violence.

In this overall relevant framework, the evaluation also found some design constraints that influence the implementation process and the achievement of results. In particular, the level of ambition of the programme design has proved to be unrealistic. In fact, the design gave for granted important preliminary activities such as surveys, stakeholder mapping and conflict analysis that were necessary prior to the implementation of important components of the programme, in order to define the best approach and methodology. As illustrated in the previous section of this report, these preliminary activities absorbed the first year of the JP cycle, or sometimes even more, thus partially explaining the delay in budget delivery and substantive progress.

By the same token, it was unrealistically assumed that the Programme would be in a position to operate from day one, without a start up phase to recruit the Programme Coordinator and set up the institutional architecture established by the MDG-F, a process that took more than six months. This is particularly problematic in light of the short duration of the Programme. In fact, the evaluation could not find an explanation on why the JP was designed only for two years, while the time limit set for MDG-F Joint programmes is normally three years. Finally, while the different components fall within a coherent conceptual framework, its wide thematic and geographic scope does not facilitate establishing internal synergies and the design did not include a clear strategy for this purpose. Similarly, the Programme design did not include an external partnership

strategy to optimize resources and maximize impact by complementing other initiatives in the same areas.

The process through which the JP was designed has not been documented at its different stages. The interviewees who were directly involved in the design, both from the UN and the national side, agree in that there was not enough consultation with national and local stakeholders until the final version of the Programme Document, when CDR endorsement was sought in order to submit the proposal and request the funds. At this stage, CDR requested that the socioeconomic component in Akkar be implemented through the Regional Development Programme, already ongoing in the same region through another partnership between UNDP and CDR, but there was no follow up to this request.

The lack of participation in the design had a negative influence on the ownership of the Programme and on the perceived relevance of some activities. Some of the local and national stakeholders initially felt that the JP was being dumped on them and resisted getting involved in the activities. This initial resistance has been overcome, but with a cost in terms of time and efforts needed to ensure the buying in of the Programme during implementation. This is another factor that can explain the delay, but the most critical issue is that the ownership of the programme still rests, with few exceptions, with the UN organizations.

The Programme design included a monitoring framework that has been revised and fine tuned during implementation to track progress of activities and outputs, with quantitative and qualitative indicators. One aspect that could be improved is the fact that while some indicators rightly try to capture the changes that may occur after the implementation of activities, such as for example greater awareness or knowledge on certain issues, others simply focus on the implementation of activities and compliance with the work plan: i.e. policy advice provided. Moreover, some of the qualitative indicators require complex surveys to be conducted regularly in order to track progress and they mainly focus on measuring awareness. The monitoring framework could benefit from more efforts to define operational aspects of different dimensions of the expected outcomes, other than the dimension of awareness. In so doing, they could constitute building blocks for a future assessment of the impact of the Programme.

Beyond the formal quality of the monitoring table, the greatest immediate challenge is that of applying the system to produce analytical information on a regular basis and ensure an horizontal and vertical flow of information that enables to make informed decisions and take corrective measures when needed. Moreover, it should be noted that the monitoring framework is still lacking baselines and most of the indicators do not have updated data.

4.4. Analysis of the Implementation Process

The Joint Programme management model was originally designed to ensure close coordination among the participating UN organization and their national and local partners, who were supposed to play a leading role in directing the programme to ensure continued relevance, internal coherence and sustainability.

A positive example of participatory dynamics is the process being conducted in Akkar. In spite of the initial delay in the start up of the activities, local stakeholders in this region

were actively involved in establishing priorities, defining the sectors of intervention and identify direct beneficiary of the socioeconomic initiatives. Similarly, the youth component and, particularly the training programmes in public Lebanese Schools, sought the active engagement of the Ministry of Education. The latter, although was not involved in the initial design, has now fully endorsed the initiative and is about to sign an agreement with UNICEF to progressively integrate the civic education training into the official curriculum for primary education.

It is also worth noting that during the course of implementation the Un organization involved in the JP created a joint coordination budget, administered by the RCO. In principle this is good basis for joint work, particularly as refers to joint monitoring activities.

Notwithstanding these positive examples, the involvement of national counterparts in managing the Programme has been limited and the implementation of the management arrangements as originally conceived has been less than optimal. Most of national and local counterparts perceive themselves as “guests” who are invited to participate in the implementation of activities, or to give their official endorsement, but are not given an active role in defining content and methodology, nor in making strategic decisions, including budget allocation. In this connection, an illustrative example is the revision of the peace building approach in Tripoli. This decision was not discussed among the different partners of the JP although it radically changed the original working hypothesis. Moreover, the information regarding the “Tripoli Initiative” has not been shared with the members of the NSC or PMC thus creating a situation that is not conducive to collaborative relations and collective ownership.

The generalized perception is that with few exceptions, the UN organizations are mostly focused on maintaining a bilateral relation with their implementing partners to carry out individual agendas. There seem to be a vacuum in terms of an effective leadership of the JP able to ensure greater coherence, internal synergies and external coordination. Beyond subjective perceptions, there are a number of practical examples that support this argument. As illustrated in the timeline of the Programme, the national and local governing bodies did not meet on a regular basis. Most importantly, the analysis of the meeting minutes and the interviews conducted reveal that they focused on reporting of activities and compliance with the delivery targets of each organization, but not much on strategic analysis and joint planning, including identifying and following up on opportunities for internal and external coordination.

In fact, activities that are supposed to be mainstreamed, such as the gender component, are being implemented as a separate segment from the rest of the Programme. Opportunities for potential synergies with other programmes are not being optimized. The socio economic component in the Akkar region, for example, is not coordinating with the Akkar Regional Development Programme, being implemented in the same region under the responsibility of UNDP and CDR. This is striking in light of the institutional mapping conducted by the JP, which could have been used to develop a partnership strategy. Similarly, the component that aims to establish dialogue forums between the Palestinian refugee camps and the surrounding Municipalities has not established any partnership with other initiatives; namely, other infrastructural projects funded by the European Commission and USAID in the Municipality of Mohamra, which is also targeted by the JP. Key stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation mission, such as schools’ directors or local Governments’ administrators and representatives of

grassroots organizations did not know about the existence of the regional working groups or were not aware of the existence of a Joint Programme that goes beyond the specific activity in which they are directly involved.

There are a number of factors that can explain this situation. The coordination Unit has no delegated authority to lead or represent the Programme; its role is *de facto* limited to facilitate the administration of the JP and the synthesis of financial and substantive information for reporting purposes. Other factors relate to the multiple line of reporting that exist within the UN development system at the country level. Each organization is autonomously responsible for their portion of the Programme budget and activities in accordance with their own administrative norms and procedures. They report directly to head quarters via their Resident Representative. The UN Resident Coordinator, although formally leading the Joint Programme, is only entrusted with a moral authority over the different Agencies, Funds and Programmes and *de facto* cannot interfere with their internal affairs. As one of the national interviewees put it: *I met different UN organizations working in the JP, but never met with the JP as such.*

Under these circumstances there is no real mutual accountability within the UN System. Similarly, mutual accountability between the UN and the Government is hindered by the Direct Execution modality, whereby national counterparts do not feel accountable for a programme in which they have no decision-making power over the administration of the budget.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

Based on the findings reported in the previous section, the evaluation concludes the following:

1. The Programme is relevant to the context in which it operates and some of its components are beginning to yield positive results. However, as a UN joint initiative is facing a learning curve in terms of effective collective action. In fact, the overall objectives and scope of the Programme are not elaborated in an implementation strategy that articulates the different set of activities, the geographical areas and the targeted groups within a consistent operational framework. By this token, the added value of the interagency nature of the Programme is still limited in terms of optimizing resources and maximizing impact
2. The youth component, the training of Palestinian Popular Committees and the participatory local development planning in Akkar are the most advanced, but other key components including the Dialogue Forums, which are at the core of the JP peace building approach, have not really taken off yet. Overall, programme budget delivery and substantive implementation are significantly delayed.
3. Compliance with delivery targets does not indicate quality by itself, but evidence shows that the delay in implementation is generating unintended consequences that may go against the effectiveness of the Programme in achieving its expected outcomes. In fact, by not delivering on the expectations raised in the inception workshop, the JP is losing credibility and feeding into already existing rumours regarding the UN Agenda in the country.
4. While political instability and high turn over in the leadership of State institutions are affecting the implementation pace of some components, these external factors do not fully explain the general delay of the Programme. Internal factors are proving to be more critical, including the following: a) insufficient clarity in the design regarding local needs and context analysis that had to be compensated during implementation; b) the need to ensure the acceptance of the Programme by national and local actors who were not involved by the UN in the design phase, which rested precious time to the implementation; c) insufficient awareness of the “do no harm” principles, particularly as relates to the need for closer follow up on expectations raised and d) less than optimal programme management efficiency of some UN organizations;
5. With few exceptions, the ownership of the Joint Programme still rests with the UN, with potentially negative consequences in terms of effectiveness and sustainability. In fact, the implementation of the management arrangements as originally conceived is less than optimal, particularly as refers to vertical and horizontal communication flows and mutual accountability. The implementation of the different programme components is under the autonomous and direct control of each participating UN organization, without an effective strategic leadership that cuts across the entire programme and with little participation of local and national actors in decision-making.

Lessons learnt

In addition to the conclusions presented above, the evaluator wishes to highlight some more general reflections that could apply also to other programmes under similar circumstances.

1. On the one hand, It is challenging for the UN organization to work in countries characterized by political instability, polarization, and limited operational capacity of national institutions. On the other, these circumstances are precisely those that may justify the presence of the UN in a given country. In this connection, substituting the leadership of national institutions in the name of greater efficiency or political neutrality does not contribute to capacity development and creates a dependency relation that is not conducive to addressing the national development challenges in a sustainable manner. As one interviewee put it: *once the UN is gone we will still be here and will be hold accountable by citizens.*
2. Although a crisis context may justify the option for a Direct Execution modality, this is hard to reconcile with the MDG-F management model and its underlying principles of national ownership, system wide coherence and mutual accountability. In fact, the comparison of the findings of this evaluation with the evaluation of other MDG-F Joint Programmes directly executed, suggests that this modality naturally leads to a dominant role of the UN and tends to exclude national partners from participating in decision making. Moreover, by resting authority to national counterparts, there is no entity entrusted with the political power to demand greater coherence and mutual accountability among the different Agencies, Funds and Programmes, who otherwise proceed according to parallel reporting lines.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering that there are only seven months left for the implementation of the programme the evaluation proposes the following key recommendations:

11. It is recommended to ensure adequate leadership of State institutions in the strategic management of the Programme and participation of local actors in defining the content and methodology of operational activities, so as to enhance ownership and sustainability. This may require greater effort to implement the management arrangements in line with their original design.
12. It is recommended to take quick action in establishing the Lebanese Palestinian dialogue forums by gathering local stakeholders around the planning and implementation of tangible services to be delivered by the JP within the time and resources available. These Forums should be chaired by the LPDC to ensure the back up of national institutions and create enabling conditions for sustainability once the programme is over.
13. It is recommended not to endorse the revision of the Programme strategy regarding the Lebanese – Lebanese dialogue Forum, named “Tripoli Initiative”, and to reallocate the remaining funds for the provision of basic services in the area, in line with the original strategy. In this connection, the NSC should assess if the nature of the relations established so far with the local Government and other local stakeholders is conducive for effective collaboration and timely implementation of such strategy. Should the NSC find that the situation is not conducive, it is recommended to drop this component and focus the remaining resources under other outputs that could yield more tangible results within the time frame available. This would reduce the scope of the Programme but maximize the impact.
14. It is recommended to follow up on the existing agreement between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, so as to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the Civic Education Programme which is proving to be an effective peace building intervention.
15. It is recommended to pay more attention to exploring windows of opportunities for external coordination and complementarities, particularly as regards other local development programmes being implemented by the UN in the Akkar Region and infrastructural projects being funded in the Refugee Camps and surrounding areas by the European Commission, USAID and other donors. In so doing, the leadership of national institutions and the engagement of UN senior management will be instrumental to establish an adequate political framework for inter-institutional cooperation. Along the same line, it is recommended to optimize potential synergies with the Lebanon Recovery Fund and the Peace Building Fund.
16. It is recommended to start as soon as possible the implementation of the Advocacy and Communication Strategy focusing on raising awareness on the MDG and deconstructing the stereotyped image of Palestinians as a security risk. The implementation of these components should start immediately, without waiting for the approval of the new Labour law. Should the latter not be approved

by Parliament, the corresponding segment of the communication strategy should be revised so as to reinforce the other components.

17. It is recommended that UN participating organizations in dialogue with their counterparts put more effort in ensuring that the activities related to gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed in the different programme components, based on a shared approach and methodology.
18. It is recommended to define a clear exist strategy for the socio economic component in Akkar. Such strategy should be developed and approved in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders, including ILO, UNDP, local authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture and the CDR, so as to make sure that it builds upon existing structures and mechanisms.
19. It is recommended to consider the possibility of a partial six months extension of the Programme, in case the deadline of March 2012 proves to be insufficient time to complete the planned activities, in particular: a) implement the demonstrative projects of the Strategic Plans for the Akkar region and b) implement the service delivery or infrastructure projects to be identified by the Dialogue Forums for inter and intra-community dialogue.
20. The extension should be issued under the following conditions: a) that the continuation of the activities does not imply further allocation of resources for salaries or honoraries of UN staff and consultants; b) that by December 2011 there is tangible substantive progress in the integration and functioning of the dialogue Forums, and in the implementation of the demonstrative projects in Akkar.

Annex I: Evaluation Questions Levels and Criteria

The evaluation questions define the information that must be generated as a result of the evaluation process. The questions are grouped according to the criteria to be used in assessing and answering them. These criteria are, in turn, grouped according to the three levels of the programme.

Design level:

- **Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of the CPPB intervention are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country, the Millennium Development Goals and the policies of associates and donors.**
 - a) Is the identification of the problems, with their respective causes, clear in the joint programme?
 - b) Does the Joint Programme take into account the particularities and specific interests of women, men, and youth in the areas of intervention?
 - c) To what extent the intervention strategy was realistic and the objectives achievable? What actions does the programme envisage, to respond to obstacles that may arise from the political and socio-cultural background?
 - d) Are the follow-up indicators relevant and do they meet the quality needed to measure the outcomes and outputs of the joint programme?
 - e) To what extent has the MDG-F Secretariat contributed to raising the quality of the design of the joint programmes?
- **Ownership in the design: Effective exercise of leadership by the country's social agents in CPPB interventions**
 - a) To what extent do the intervention objectives and strategies of the Joint Programme respond to national and regional plans and programmes, to identified needs, and to the operational context of national politics?
 - b) To what extent have the country's national and local authorities, civil society, and social partners, participated, , at the design stage of the CPPB intervention?

Process level

- **Efficiency: Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, etc.) have been turned into results**
 - a) To what extent does the joint programme's management model (i.e. instruments; economic, human and technical resources; organizational structure; information flows; decision-making in management) contribute to obtaining the predicted products and results?

- b) To what extent are the participating agencies coordinating with each other, with the government and with civil society? Is there a methodology underpinning the work and internal communications that contributes to the joint implementation?
- c) To what extent are the participating agencies and their implementing partners following a clear monitoring system?
- d) Are there efficient coordination mechanisms to avoid overloading the counterparts, participating population/actors?
- e) Is the pace of implementing the products of the programme ensuring the completeness of the results of the joint programme? How do the different components of the joint programme interrelate?
- f) Are work methodologies, financial instruments, etc. shared among agencies, institutions and Joint Programmes?
- g) Have more efficient (sensitive) and appropriate measures been adopted to respond to the political and socio-cultural problems identified?

- Ownership in the process: Effective exercise of leadership by the country's social agents in CPPB interventions

- h) To what extent have the target population and participants made the programme their own, taking an active role in it? What modes of participation have taken place?
- i) To what extent have public/private national resources and/or counterparts been mobilized to contribute to the programme's objective and produce results and impacts?
- j) To what extent has the programme been effective in putting in place mechanisms to fostering the participation of local partners and beneficiaries?

Results level

- Effectiveness: Extent to which the objectives of the CPPB intervention have been achieved or are expected to be achieved, bearing in mind their relative importance.

- a) Is the programme making progress towards achieving the stipulated results?
 - a. To what extent and in what ways is the joint programme contributing to the Millennium Development Goals at the local and national levels?
 - b. To what extent is the programme contributing to the goals set by the thematic window, and in what ways?
 - c. To what extent is the programme contributing to its outcomes and outputs?
- b) Is the stipulated timeline of outputs being met? What factors are contributing to progress or delay in the achievement of the outputs and outcomes? What corrective actions are being proposed and implemented?
- c) Do the outputs produced meet the required high quality?

- d) Does the programme have follow-up mechanisms (to verify the quality of the products, punctuality of delivery, etc.) to measure progress in the achievement of the envisaged results?
- e) Is the programme providing coverage to beneficiaries as planned?
- f) In what way has the programme come up with innovative measures for problem-solving?
- g) Have any good practices, success stories, or transferable examples been identified?
- h) In what ways has the programme contributed to the Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in North Lebanon?
- i) What types of differentiated effects are resulting from the joint programme in accordance with the sex, race, ethnic group, rural or urban setting of the beneficiary population, and to what extent?

Sustainability: Probability of the benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term.

- a) Are the necessary premises occurring to ensure the sustainability of the effects of the joint programme?

At local and national level:

- i. Is the programme supported by national and/or local institutions?
 - ii. Are these institutions showing technical capacity and leadership commitment to keep working with the programme and to repeat it?
 - iii. Have operating capacities been created and/or reinforced in national partners?
 - iv. Do the partners have sufficient financial capacity to keep up the benefits produced by the programme?
 - v. Is the duration of the programme sufficient to ensure a cycle that will project the sustainability of the interventions?
- b) To what extent are the visions and actions of the partners consistent or divergent with regard to the joint programme?
 - c) In what ways can the governance of the joint programme be improved so that it has greater likelihood of achieving future sustainability?

Annex II: Main documents consulted

Programmatic and management related documents

- United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2010-2014
- Joint Programme Document (PRODOC)
- JP Transmit Memo
- Joint Implementation Guidelines
- MDG-F Communication and Advocacy Strategy
- Terms of Reference of the thematic window on PB&CP
- JP Monitoring reports until June 2011
- Revised Monitoring Plan
- Revised Communication Strategy
- MDG-F Secretariat Mission Report December 2009
- MDG-F Secretariat Mission Report Nov. Dec. 2010
- Lebanon's Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri's Future Current, Middle East Report N. 96, 26 May 2010. International Crisis Groups
- NSC and PMC Minutes of Meetings
- Minutes of UNICEF conflict prevention and peace building coordination meeting 27 June 2011
- Capacity building by popular Committees in Naher el Bared and Bedawi Camp- background document (UNRCO, UNRWA)
- Tripoli Initiative: Outline of the Initiative Strategy
- Jabal Mohsen /Bab El Tebbaneh in Tripoli: Issues/challenges and Safety assets
- Jabal Mohsen /Bab El Tebbaneh in Tripoli: **Issues and challenges and Peace assets.**
- Tripoli, Priority and SWOT Analysis.
- Tripoli conflict assessment maps
- Tripoli initiative key messages: Safeguarding Coexistence and Harmony in Tripoli

Context Analysis related and other documents

- Conflict Analysis Report September 2010 (UNDP-World Vision)
- Palestinian and Lebanese relations and interfaces 2010 (Study by Common Space Initiative)
- Building Dialogue and Communication skills –Nabaa Report 2010 (UNESCO)
- Institutional mapping of Northern Akkar 2010 (ILO)

Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Northern Lebanon – MTE Final Report
20 September 2011

- Socio-economic Assessment for Northern Akkar 2010 Report (ILO)
- Lebanon- Syria Borders Report 2009 (Now Lebanon)
- Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team Report 2008 (Now Lebanon)
- Participatory Value Chain Analysis Summary (ILO)
- Media Reviews 17-29 June
- NBC latest updates 17 June (Newsletter by UNRCO)
- Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East: Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy (Sari Hanafi)
- IOM North Lebanon report
- ECE multi sector assessment of Lebanese Syrian borders

Annex III Mission Agenda

**Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in North Lebanon
Mid-Term Evaluation - Monday 18 to Tuesday 26 July 2011**

Draft Agenda

Day 1: Monday 18 July 2011. Beirut	
9:00 -- 10:30	Meeting with Joint Programme Coordinator
10:30 -- 11:15	Meeting with UNRWA team
11:15 -- 12:00	Meeting with UNICEF team
12:00 -- 12:45	Meeting with ILO team
13:00 -- 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 -- 15:30	Meeting with UNDP team
15:30 -- 17:00	Opening meeting with Evaluation Reference Group
Day 2: Tuesday 19 July 2011. Beirut	
11:00 -- 12:30	Meeting with Ministry of Agriculture focal point
13:00 -- 14:30	Meeting with Ministry of Labour focal point
14:30 -- 15:30	Meeting with Ministry of Education and Higher Education focal point
15:30 -- 16:30	Meeting with Irene Cabrera - Spanish Cooperation
Day 3: Wednesday 20 July 2011. Beirut	
10:00 -- 11:00	Meeting with LPDC technical team
11:30 -- 12:30	Meeting with Common Space Initiative on Tebbaneh-Jabal area/UNDP activity
14:00 -- 15:00	Meeting with CDR
15:00 -- 16:30	Meeting with UNFPA
16:30	Lunch and road to Tripoli
Day 4: Thursday 21 July 2011. Tripoli	
9:00 -- 10:30	Meeting with Katia Kartanian - Head of Mouvement Social in Tripoli on youth component/UNICEF activity
10:30 -- 12:00	Meeting with Sana Helweh- Field Focal Point of MoEHE

Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Northern Lebanon – MTE Final Report
20 September 2011

12:00 -- 13:00	Lunch Break
13:30 -- 14:30	Meeting with Mohammad Sleiman - Director of Jabal Mohsen public school
14:30 -- 15:30	Meeting with Rabih Ali - Citizen from Tebbaneh - Jabal Mohsen
15:30 -- 16:30	Meeting with Manal Hassoun - "AL MAJMOUA" Microfinance component
Day 5: Friday 22 July 2011	
9:00 -- 10:30	Focus Group with members of Popular Committees (BC and NBC)
10:30 -- 12:00	Meeting with 3 members from NBC/BC Regional Working Group (Mona Said, Ousama, Saliha Wannas)
12:00 -- 13:00	Lunch
14:00 -- 15:30	Meeting with Abdel Moneem Osman - Mayor of Mohammara
16:00 -- 17:00	Meeting with Joseph Hawli from NBC/BC Regional Working Group
Day 6: Saturday 23 July 2011	
10:00 -- 11:00	Meeting with Racha Harrouk - Director of Tebbaneh public school
12:00 -- 13:00	Focus Group with UNRWA schools directors
14:00 -- 16:00	Meeting with "Beyond" & members from youth groups/UNDP Leadership training
Day 7: Sunday 24 July 2011	
All Day	Drafting Day
Day 8: Monday 25 July 2011	
9:00 -- 10:30	Meeting with Dr. Bechara Eid - UNFPA activity
10:30 -- 11:30	Meeting with Nazha Salloum, Oum Khaled - UNFPA activity
12:00 -- 13:30	Meeting with members of Akkar economic forums and Regional Working Groups
16:00	Road to Beirut
Day 9: Tuesday 26 July 2011	
10:30 -- 12:00	Closing meeting with Evaluation Reference Group
12:30 -- 13:00	Debriefing meeting with Resident Coordinator