

P.E.A.C.E.

An Economic Development and Peace Building Success Story



CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL

PE.A.C.E.: AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE BUILDING SUCCESS STORY

I. BACKGROUND

Since the end of the Cold War, the issues of economic development and conflict resolution have become increasingly linked. In fact, of the world's 20 poorest countries as defined by the World Bank, about half of them have or have recently had significant social conflict. Poverty is both a cause and effect of conflict. Many countries that were reasonably prosperous, or at least better off, have been greatly impoverished because of social conflict. Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and others come to mind. In these and other countries, sustainable development cannot be achieved without resolution of the deep social conflicts that so damaged and impoverished societies.

Economic development practice usually assumes social peace, or at least it does not consider dealing with social conflict to be something that needs to be central to development practice. However, since many societies are in conflict or have recently emerged from conflict, it is time to link development practice and conflict prevention more explicitly. This monograph describes a process where conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and economic development are taken as an interrelated, seamless process. Under this process the two reinforce each other and thereby make sustainable development a more likely outcome. The process that we have implemented in Lebanon over the past 3 years is called PE.A.C.E. (Participation for Economic And Community Expansion).

PE.A.C.E. is carried out under a cooperative agreement between Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). As conceived by USAID, PE.A.C.E. concentrates on the rural areas of Lebanon. More specifically, it is implemented in clusters of villages where the clusters have common characteristics including shared resources such as water, similar economic activities (crops and industries), or common environmental concerns (sanitation and solid waste disposal). While the clusters have many things in common, PE.A.C.E. always includes a variety of religious groups in each cluster. In Lebanon religious groups are generally called "confessions" in polite discourse, and in that country they are numerous. In the recent past much of Lebanon's civil conflict has fallen along religious lines, although regional politics have played a major role along with economic and ideological concerns. A subsequent section briefly outlines the conflicts in Lebanon and the groups that participated in them. Here, it is enough to note that nearly all groups played a more-or-less active part in the civil conflict. At one time or another, most Lebanese confessional groups fought alone or with various allies against many other groups thereby straining relations among them considerably. The legacy of the many-faceted conflict has been lingering suspicion and hostility and a resulting lack of cooperation among confessional groups.

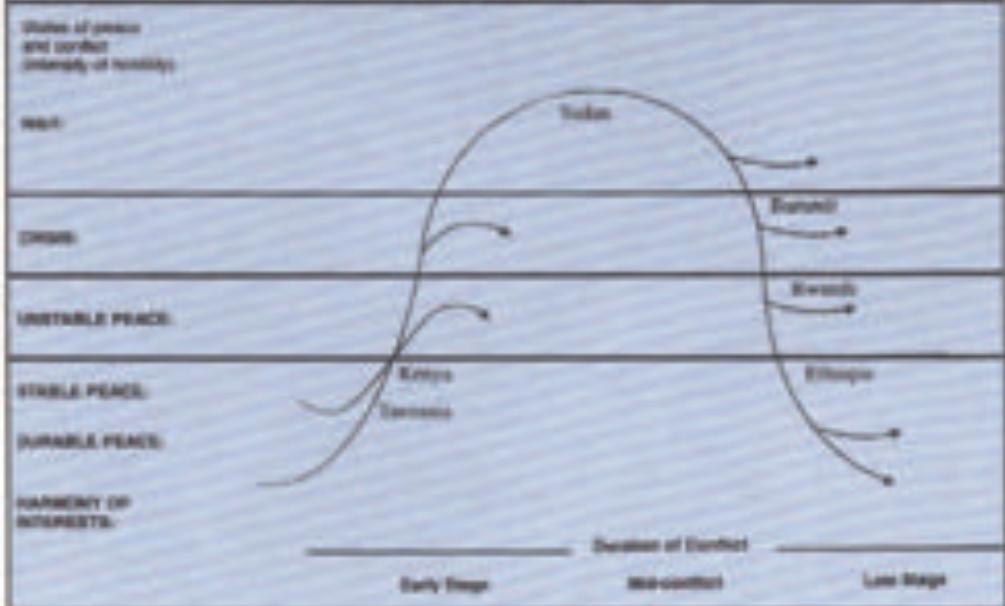
It was in this unpromising context that P.E.A.C.E. was launched in July of 1998. Despite the obstacles, it has been a significant success; so much so, that we believe it is time to share our experience with others. Some of the lessons we have learned may be useful to professionals in the development and conflict resolution fields who are trying to promote sustainable development and reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

THE CYCLE OF CONFLICT

Before getting to the specifics of the conflict in Lebanon and the P.E.A.C.E. approach, we need to say a few words about conflict. This is necessary to define terms and understand the context in which the P.E.A.C.E. process operates. The following description is based on CNR's 1997 publication *Preventing and Mitigating Violent Conflicts: A Guide for Practitioners*.

While the analysis of the causes and evolution of conflict is complex, a simplified model of the conflict cycle will serve our purposes here. Conflicts change over time; hostilities emerge, grow, and subside. The figure below sums up the stages of the conflict cycle.

FIGURE 2
THE LIFE HISTORY OF A CONFLICT



- The horizontal axis represents the stages of the conflict through time—the early, middle and late phases.
- The vertical axis measures the conflict in terms of the degree of cooperation or hostility between the parties.
- The curve portrays the rise, peaking, and falling-off of the conflict.

Of course, this is a general view of conflict and particular conflicts need not exhibit the smooth development pictured. The arrows that deviate from the curve illustrate that conflicts can exhibit different trajectories, jumps, or discontinuities. Conflicts that have ceased can re-ignite, starting the process anew. Nonetheless, most violent conflicts exhibit periods of initial growth, full-blown antagonism, and abatement from the high point of hostility.

This model of conflict roughly fits the civil conflict in Lebanon. The next section describes that conflict so that the P.E.A.C.E. process can be put in its proper context. Before getting to those details, suffice it to say that Lebanon passed through the rising and plateau stages of conflict until 1975 to 1990 during which the conflict was at high levels. The Lebanese conflict fell off rapidly after 1990. There has been no organized violence since 1990 and so we can place Lebanon somewhere in the Unstable Peace/Stable Peace portion of the cycle.

At this stage of the conflict cycle, the challenge is to support and encourage the movement toward more stable peace with goals of advancing to durable peace and social harmony. In terms of this analysis, the mission of P.E.A.C.E. is to encourage the process through its conflict resolution/economic development activities.

CONFLICT IN LEBANON

Lebanon has been a sectarian mosaic for hundreds of years. The country currently contains at least 18 religious sects, and conflict goes back to the era of the Crusades. The Maronite Christians came to Lebanon around 1,500 years ago, and were the majority until the early 1970s. At that time the Muslim population overtook the Christian one, with the Shiite community becoming the largest individual sect in the country. Through the 15th century, the Druze had the largest political influence in Mount Lebanon—the central part of the country—due to the fact that they were the landowners, while the Christians were the peasants. From the 16th century onward, Maronite Christian influence rose and was cemented in the 17th and 18th centuries after internal conflicts within the Druze community, and between the Christians and Druze, allowed the Maronites to become the most widespread and most influential community in the country.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I and the declaration of the State of Lebanon with its current borders, the Moslems looked to counter the influence of the majority Christians by calling for power sharing and/or unification with Syria. The various conflicts between 1920 and 1975, in addition to the never addressed issues of power sharing between Christians and Muslims, all contributed to the breakdown of the state beginning in 1975.

In the early 1970s, government inaction on power sharing issues and the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) increasingly high military profile, Lebanese Christians and others began to organize militias under various political leaders. On April 13, 1975, the country was ripe for explosion and a bus

carrying armed Palestinian guerrillas through a Christian neighborhood ignited widespread armed conflict. Since 1975 the war can be divided into four major phases with side conflicts going on simultaneously.

1) 1975-1976: Christians vs. The PLO - Moslem Alliance

In the first years of the civil conflict, a coalition of Christian militias faced an alliance of the PLO, the leftist parties, and the Moslems. That alliance was backed by Syria, which later switched its support to the Christians. Syria was supposed to mediate among the different groups and was able to broker an agreement in February, 1976 that would have granted some of the Moslems' demands; but it also positioned Syria to be a major player in Lebanon's internal affairs. By March the army disintegrated and the Druze leader Kamal Jumblat was anticipating victory over the Christians through his alliance with the PLO. The increasing influence of the PLO led Syria to view the war as a regional conflict that put its interests and security at stake. This led Syria to switch back to supporting the Christians in June of that year.

The "Spring 76" offensive of the PLO-Leftist alliance brought the war to Mount Lebanon and a large number of villages came under its control. This offensive was too much for the Christians to handle, and it gave their "temporary" Syrian allies the opportunity to deploy in the North and the Bekaa under the pretext of saving the Lebanese Christian population from annihilation. Syrian troops eventually moved towards Beirut and clashed with the PLO-Moslem alliance. This led to an Arab summit that ended this phase of the war by deploying an Arab Detente Force made up mostly of Syrian troops already in Lebanon.

2) 1977-1982: Christians vs. Syria/PLO vs. Israel

Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977 led to a rapprochement between Syria and the PLO with a simultaneous deterioration of relations with the Christians. With Bashir Gemayel commanding all Christian forces, clashes with Syrian troops began in East Beirut over the summer of 1978, forcing an agreement that put the Christians out of the city after the intervention of the UN Security Council requesting a cease fire between Syria and the militias.

Also during this period, PLO fighters began to attack Northern Israel. This resulted in the first Israeli mini-invasion of Lebanon in 1978, which brought about the deployment of UN troops in South Lebanon. It also established the security zone and the formation of the South Lebanon Army (SLA). With the PLO continuing to harass the Israelis and the Syrians deeply involved in Lebanon against the Christians, the government of Menachem Begin waited for a pretext to invade; it came in the form of a failed assassination attempt against an Israeli diplomat in London in 1982. The Israelis attacked with the goal of reaching the PLO's headquarters in Beirut. Israel and its Christian allies meant to drive out the PLO from Lebanon, eliminate Syria from the internal Lebanese affairs, and most importantly, have Lebanon become the second Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Israel achieved only the first of those aims.

3) 1983-1988: Shites and Druze vs. Christians

The refusal of Lebanon's President Amine Gemayel to bring the heads of the

Moslem militias into his government, namely Druze leader Walid Jumblat and Shiite leader Nabih Berri, caused both groups to look for a chance to overthrow Christian rule. When President Gemayel refused to sign a peace treaty with Israel, the disappointed Israelis began withdrawing forces from Mount Lebanon, thus leaving the Christians in the area exposed to Druze attack.

Backed by Syrian forces, which could now act more freely with the Israelis further south, the Druze clashed with the Christians in the mountains in September of 1983, while the Shites clashed with the Multi National Forces (MNF) in Beirut. The backbone of the MNF, the US Marines, were put in the position of taking sides in an internal conflict with minimal bearing on US interests. The pressure from the American public was too much to sustain once 241 Marines were killed by a car bomb at Beirut International Airport and President Reagan withdrew the troops. In the meantime 200,000 Christians were being displaced and their homes destroyed by the Druze forces in Mount Lebanon. Christian villages such as Sifaya, Dloun, Aammiq, and Kneysch were totally demolished. In a few cases, such as the village of Kfar Qatra, a mixed Druze and Christian town, the houses were spared but the Christians were displaced.

The Islamic revolution in Iran also had a major bearing on Lebanese events. The Israeli invasion of 1982 provided the rationale for the formation of Hizbullah (The Party of God). Hizbullah grew to rival Amal in the Shiite community, which ultimately lead to mini-wars within this community. After the security zone took its final geographic shape in the mid 1980s, battle lines were set between Hizbullah and Israel that put front line villages on both sides in a daily conflict for the next 15 years. In many South Lebanon towns residents either fled or only stayed because they were too poor to relocate. This went on until Israel completely withdrew its troops from Lebanon in May of 2000.

4) 1988-1990: Christians vs. Syria/Christians vs. Christians

By 1988, General Michael Aoun, Commander of the Lebanese Army, emerged as a leading figure. Presidential elections did not take place as scheduled due to the failure of Christians and Syrians to agree on a candidate. The outgoing President appointed General Aoun, a Maronite, as prime minister, keeping the other top job in the country in the hands of a Christian. However, Salim Hoss, the prime minister who had resigned a few months earlier, withdrew his resignation and asserted that he was the constitutional authority. Lebanon thus had two governments with two prime ministers, a Christian in East Beirut and a Moslem in West Beirut.

Arab governments attempted to broker an agreement that would put an acceptable president in place. These attempts finally resulted in the Taef Accord that was signed in November, 1989 when it became obvious that General Aoun's forces could no longer resist the Syrians which they had been fighting for seven months. However, after a new president was elected, General Aoun launched a new war, this time against fellow Christians who viewed the Taef Accord as an acceptable vehicle to end the Lebanese conflict. Finally, in October, 1990, the Syrian army attacked Aoun's positions, removing

him from power; and ushering in an era of Syrian domination of Lebanon's political process.

In 1991, the government issued an order to dissolve and disarm all militias, and called on them to join the Lebanese army. Two militias, however, were excluded from this decision: Amal and Hizbullah, which continue to operate and have weapons, in addition to the Palestinians inside the refugee camps.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF P.E.A.C.E.

The challenge of P.E.A.C.E. is to build durable peace, sustainable development, and sustainable democracy by having them reinforce each other. Furthermore, the challenge is to build them in such a way that they promote social stability and integration. This latter aspect is more complex and challenging than it first appears. Post-conflict societies and these include many besides Lebanon are deeply divided in many ways. Individuals and groups are often physically displaced. The communication links among groups have been curtailed or destroyed. There are few or no common social or economic activities. There is mutual distrust, suspicion, and outright hatred. In this context the apparently most logical and realistic approach is to accept these divisions and begin reconstruction and development activities. This approach is usually described with rhetoric such as "dealing with the facts on the ground" or "being realistic." The idea is that once reconstruction and development have improved people's lives, they will be more amenable to conflict resolution.

The P.E.A.C.E. approach rejects that view. We believe that it is neither positive nor practical to accept the apparent realities that have been created by civil conflict. We only work with those who will commit to open, democratic participation of all groups and individuals who have legitimate interests. We believe that development based on the so-called "facts" of separation, suspicion, and hate only sow the seeds of future conflict because they inevitably give rise to even more jealousy and resentment which eventually leads to renewed violence.

Our experience shows that development and reconciliation are not either/or propositions. Reconciliation and economic development, when appropriately linked, are mutually supporting. Economic development in post-conflict countries without reconciliation is inherently fragile and is likely to be destroyed by new rounds of violence. Indeed, one could take the position that if reconciliation and development are not linked, future conflict is highly probable. The many attempts to halt the fighting in Lebanon during the 15-year civil war are a perfect example because none were accompanied by real attempts for reconciliation. The so-called internal peace agreements of 1976, and the intervention of the Multi-National Forces (MNF) after the Israeli invasion of 1982 are the most obvious.

The P.E.A.C.E. approach produces lasting results. The so-called realistic approach described above does not provide long-term remedies. Experience shows that "realism" may work during a cease-fire or even under a more formal cessation of hostilities for a number of years. However, "realism" often does not build lasting peace, as does the P.E.A.C.E. approach.

III. PRINCIPLES OF P.E.A.C.E.

The P.E.A.C.E. method rests on certain principles that are the foundation of its success. We must emphasize that these principles are not open to compromise or negotiation. If staff violate them, they are dismissed. If local authorities demand that we violate them in order to start a project, we walk away from the project. If national authorities demand we violate them, we mobilize pressure on those authorities to back away from their demands.

This approach may seem naive and stiff-necked. And it sometimes leads to significant delays in implementing projects. However, it is crucial to stand for principles on both ethical and practical grounds. If a project does not live up to its principles, it will become corrupt and eventually fail or at least be less than fully successful. This is particularly true in societies (and this includes most less-developed countries, not just Lebanon) where corruption is the norm. On practical grounds, once an organization establishes its reputation for operating according to principle and without corruption, demands for corrupt behavior become rare. Our experience shows that most people do not wish to be corrupt. They participate in corruption because they must survive within a corrupt system. Once shown that they can operate cleanly, most people do so.

There are 10 P.E.A.C.E. principles listed below and illustrated with anecdotes in accompanying blue text.

1. Political neutrality: This principle is central. Post-conflict societies are very highly politicized and identification of a development organization with one or even several political sides will be absolutely fatal. This is particularly true if there is a natural bias against the organization because it is identified with a particular country, in our case the United States.

The P.E.A.C.E. project recently expanded into South Lebanon after the withdrawal of Israeli forces. The group that was most prominent in the conflict with Israel during the occupation of South Lebanon was Hizbullah (The Party of God). While Hizbullah certainly had widespread support in the South, we found that they were not very popular in some communities. In fact, some of the villages where we set up committees attempted to exclude members with Hizbullah connections. We explained to those communities that it was important to include all groups that had interests and support in the area so that the community could come to consensus on the projects they needed. Eventually, the communities agreed to include members that represent legitimate interest groups (e.g., farmers, local government officials, teachers, etc.) who had Hizbullah connections. Thus, a member of Hizbullah who served as the head of the local agricultural co-op would sit on the committee in that capacity and not as a member of a political party. Since then the friction among local groups has been less and projects have been agreed upon reasonably easily.



President Barack Obama's recent announcement that he will meet with U.S.-based revolutionaries

2. Transparency/no corruption: This principle was noted above, mostly with reference to corruption. However, transparent operations are important in other ways such as dealing with contractors and suppliers, the press, and sister organizations.

Our project awards are totally transparent to all those concerned. Once a project is decided on by a committee, CAII engineers work with the local technical person delegated by the community in order to provide the Bill of Quantities (BOQ) for the Request for Offers. This BOQ is finalized by CAII's technical team and sent back to the committee for review. The project is then put out for bidding (Request for Offers). Each portion of the project is put in a separate line item and all potential sub-contractors are evaluated on a line item basis. A detailed comparative matrix of each project with all line items of all bidders are included. Bids below cost are rejected and those with the lowest acceptable prices are called in for an interview. Once a contractor is chosen, the village committee has access to this matrix so it can see exactly what reasoning was behind the choice. The losing bidders also have access to the matrix so they can compare their offers with those of the winner. This is done by giving committees copies of all paperwork relevant to the Request for Offers process, which they in turn share with contractors. In all instances, local contractors from the village are preferred over those from outside the area if their bids are appropriate. This is standard procedure on all CAII project awards.

3. Community buy-in: The P.E.A.C.E. process does not dictate to people what they should want. Rather, all projects are chosen by the affected groups with CAII serving as facilitator and advisor. The local communities also must share the cost of the project. Experience teaches that development projects that are not fully supported by the community do not get built; if they get built, they fall apart through lack of maintenance.



Tit: Barqa Hill (left: under construction (photo) and after completion (below))

The Barqa village committee identified a collection reservoir to store water, which runs off from the snow in the mountains in the spring to use for orchard irrigation during the dry summer months. Three construction options were submitted:

Type of Reservoir	Total Cost
Concrete	\$140,000.00
Concrete and Clay	\$83,000.00
High Density Polyethylene	\$62,978.00

A concrete reservoir was declined due to its high cost. CAII asked the committee to search for alternatives which would lower the cost. The committee returned with the concrete and clay reservoir offer, which was also declined because it was not technically efficient and could result in water seepage. An investigation by the CAII team led us to suggest the High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) as the least expensive, yet most technically adequate option. At first, the farmers were reluctant to try this new technique. During several meetings between the committee and CAII, the use of this material was demonstrated to be effective in other countries. The farmers were convinced of the technical superiority of this option compared to concrete, which cracks due to the wide temperature variations. The results have been excellent, and a neighboring village has contracted with CAII for a similar, somewhat larger, reservoir.

4. Operation by democratic principles: All decisions are taken democratically. We do not create or endorse local dictatorships. If a local committee is prevented from forming or is dominated by one faction, we stop the project process until adequate representation and democratic decision-making are established. One democratic principle that we insist on with our committees is avoiding the "tyranny of the majority." This value, of course, is very familiar in the American context, but is much less appreciated in many countries where the concept of "winner takes all" is common and a "loyal opposition" is not.

The Kfar Qara village committee comprises Maronite and Druze members of the community, as well as the Municipality Head and his deputy, the Muhtas, and the former president of the social club. In the beginning, the Municipality Head sought to control all decision-making and implementation processes. After long deliberations among the villagers and the village committee, CAII's efforts in assisting the participatory process were successful when the community agreed upon a development project for the village. The main need was for drainage canals throughout the village and agricultural lands for the prevention of house flooding and soil erosion. The project consists of the construction and rehabilitation of 1570 meters of canals. The project was done in two phases. The first phase of the project encountered problems that CAII staff, with continuous effort, was able to ease. After completion of the second phase, the project now benefits all the houses in Kfar Qara along with 15 hectares being protected from landslides, flooding, and soil erosion. Approximately 180 families benefit.

5. No empty promises concerning money: We do not pursue projects unless we have the funds in hand.



One of the Kfar Qara drainage canals

CAII began a very low profile needs assessment in South Lebanon eight months before the withdrawal of Israeli Forces from the area. However, it was made very clear to the locals and to our potential partners such as the UN Peace Keeping Forces that this was only to collect information on local needs. After the withdrawal our budget was expanded to include activities in the South and we encouraged the formation of village committees to define and implement priority projects. With plans made and funds in hand, these projects were started quickly without raising inappropriate expectations.



The Chouf intensive water resource project [second] multi-phase project] Kfar Qara, Lebanon.
Note damage caused in the first photo.



E. Participation of women: We insist on significant participation of women in the important projects and decisions. This can be a difficult issue in places like Lebanon. However, we have found that great progress can be made, even in very traditional communities. We do "women's projects" rarely and only under special circumstances. Women's participation in the P.E.A.C.E. internal operations is covered under Principle #9 below.



The 3 photos in this box illustrate these efforts. The (left) one of the committee meeting shows representatives of the 10 participating co-ops who form the Union of Co-ops to build the apricot processing facility. The woman in photo is the Chairperson. The photo of construction workers (below) is of some of the laboring crew and their supervising engineer. The woman is the supervising project engineer. The last photo (bottom left) is of 3 bulldozer operators in the cab of a bulldozer conferring about the excavation of the 8 million-gallon water storage facility for irrigation in Barqa. While the woman in this picture may not be the only female heavy equipment operator in Lebanon, she is one of a rare breed. None of these women would have attained these positions without CAII's insistence on women having significant roles in the P.E.A.C.E. process.



7. Secularism: Since religion and politics are closely intertwined in Lebanon, secularism and political neutrality are also intertwined. We insist that none of the confessions within the cluster be excluded from the planning and implementation of projects. Furthermore, we insist that all facilities built with our assistance be open to all persons.

Our participation opened the way for a non-sectarian social center in the village of Fakha in the Hermel cluster. The cluster committee had planned a 2-story center with a clinic on the first floor and a training/meeting facility on the 2nd floor. The cluster-wide committee requested CAII support to build the 2nd floor facility when they ran out of funds. This committee is made up of local representatives of local co-ops from Muslim and Christian villages [Sunni, Shiite, and Catholic]. Fakha Village itself is 75% Sunni and 25% Catholic. CAII agreed to the project if the cluster committee promised to open the facilities on a non-sectarian basis. They sent us a letter promising a non-discriminatory policy.

B. Independence from the central government: PE.A.C.E. is dedicated to development at the local level and is not a project aimed at strengthening central government institutions. At the same time, we try to model a more appropriate relationship between localities and the central government by encouraging appropriate decentralization of decision-making. In Lebanon, as in many countries, the central government is too strong—although this does not mean it is competent. We maintain cordial and correct relations with the central government, but all political action is led by the local communities. We also attempt to show the central government that there are positive benefits to decentralization. Specifically, we try to explain that appropriate decentralization takes some of the burden off their shoulders, which is important because the central government does not have the resources to meet the needs it is charged with satisfying.

The Druze village committee of Bichetfine in South Mount Lebanon decided on a sewer project. The project was to build a sewerage system and treatment plant to serve 380 households. The system was greatly needed because the ground water in the area was extensively polluted by inadequate sewerage disposal. The problem was that the Ministry of Hydraulic Resources resisted a village-level waste treatment plant because they believed that the local people did not know what was good for them and because the Lebanese Government had a master plan for one treatment facility to service all of South Mount Lebanon. The locals were able to get permits for their local facility from the Ministry of Municipalities instead based on the fact that no funding was available for the monster treatment facility before 2025. The local people played on the political power struggle between the two ministries (Hydraulics and Municipalities) and were able to use politics to the advantage of the little guy. Moreover, with USAID/CAII's support, they were able to implement a model sewer system along with the sewage facility.

B. Modeling PE.A.C.E. principles in our own staff and work style: As the saying goes, "walk the talk." Our staff is male and female, Muslim, Christian, and Druze. Furthermore, the staff is given assignments strictly on skill and merit. For example, we never send a Christian staff member to deal with Christians on sectarian grounds. Women make up more than half the professional staff, including several supervisors. All operations are transparent and are made by teams.

At times a local official will call the Project Director in an attempt to overrule or influence a coordinator's decision. Coordinators have delegated responsibilities, which they carry out and which all parties are expected to respect. Regardless of whether the coordinator is male or female, the project director refers the local officials back to the coordinator where the authority has been delegated and requests that they take it up again at that level. This provides a model of appropriate decision-making authority for both male and female coordinators in the communities where we work.



10. Technical excellence: Bringing the needed technical skills and quality control processes together guarantee a first-class project. When our communities express a preference for working with people of similar confession, we point out that we will assemble the most qualified people for the job regardless of religious affiliation.

The Uchetfine sewer project also illustrates the role of technical excellence. The usual project planning process was followed and bids were solicited. The low bidder was a Shiite contractor and the 2nd lowest bidder was a local Christian. Part of our commitment to technical excellence is to thoroughly review bids. The review process is described below. Our review showed that the villagers' preferred contractor (the Shiite) was bidding below cost and that the Christian's bid accurately reflected true costs. In addition, the Christian contractor's technical specifications were much superior, and he had already successfully worked for us on other projects.

We advised the village that the preferred contractor would not be able to perform. Because of the too-low bid, he would do shoddy work, not live up to specs, or not produce on time. Furthermore, we advised them that the Christian contractor's bid was both realistic in cost and technically superior. We emphasized how important a quality job was since this was something that would affect the village in the foreseeable future. They picked their preferred contractor.

As we predicted, the chosen contractor did not perform adequately. At that point the village committee came to us to see if there was a way out of the contract. We explained that it was their contract, but we would do what we could to help. Three days of negotiations ensued between the committee and the contractor with us supporting the committee. The goal was to get the contractor to voluntarily withdraw so that we could change contractors. The incentive for him to do so was that we could invoke the penalty provisions that we insert into all construction contracts. In the end the contractor withdrew under an agreement to complete certain sections of the network. This was done, and the new contractor took over. The new contractor completed the work on time and at a 6% higher cost than he had originally bid.

About a month after the new contractor took over, the village committee met with us to review the incident. They thanked us for our support and stated that the experience had taught them a valuable lesson: the importance of using the best people, and not limiting themselves by discriminating on sectarian or other non-economic grounds.

IV. IMPLEMENTING P.E.A.C.E

The entire P.E.A.C.E. process—from initial contact with the cluster of villages through project completion and followup—is highly structured. This highly structured process enables us to know where all projects are at any time, along with what steps are being implemented, to monitor quality, and to make changes when needed.

OUR FOCUS: THE CLUSTER

As mentioned above, the operational unit of P.E.A.C.E. is a cluster of villages. We currently serve 8 clusters that comprise 9 to 13 villages each. The populations of the clusters vary between 14,000 and 32,000. Because sectarian reconciliation is so impor-

tant, we always make sure that the clusters contain significant numbers of 2 or more confessions. The villages themselves are generally homogeneous.

THE VILLAGE AND CLUSTER COMMITTEES

The first substantive action after initial contact with a village is establishing a Village Committee:

- The CAII team contacts key people in each village to introduce the PE.A.C.E. Project. Field coordinators explain the procedures and requirements for assistance.
- Each village forms a committee that is representative of local institutions such as the municipality, the Mokhtar, agricultural cooperatives, unions and clubs, NGOs or CBOs, along with any member whose participation the community deems advisable. Each comes to the process with their institutional interests in mind; the outcome is the expressed collective interest of the community through extensive meetings facilitated by the CAII team. The individual political backgrounds of committee members become irrelevant since all are welcome with total "political neutrality" on our part. The committee is encouraged to operate in the same way.
- This is followed by identification of project priorities and taking inventory of community physical and human resources that could be used in the project. These individuals are requested to pick priorities with total "political neutrality."
- The committee then identifies a project as the most vital for development and/or revitalization. CAII staff would then assist the committee members in the budgeting and bid process.
- Implementation begins once the necessary documentation is completed for each proposed project. In many cases, particularly where clusters are far from Beirut and not easily accessible, we employ part-time local coordinators who have the responsibility of setting up our local network and help mobilize the community to form a committee. As work proceeds, this individual acts as a major element in solving conflicts, which could arise. He or she can talk the "local" language, which is peculiar to every community.

Once the Village Committees have been formed, we encourage the formation of a Cluster Committee. A CAII staff member—the Coordinator—is appointed to be the point of contact between the cluster, its constituent villages, and CAII.

The CAII approach to facilitating revitalization fully involves the villagers in a process of defining infrastructural, economic, and environmental constraints to redevelopment and determining the most realistic solutions. In each cluster, CAII strengthens grassroots organizations such as farmer cooperatives, social associations, and women's organizations and mobilizes villagers through these

entities first to assess their needs and determine priorities, and then to develop and implement plans of action to address those needs. Strong public participation and concerted efforts to involve women in decision-making and income-generating activities are hallmarks of this approach.

Forming committees can sometimes give rise to contentious issues. Disputes over representation of individuals and groups and the role of women come up often. Disputes over representation usually involve efforts by some people to exclude others. Sometimes political rivalries result in the more powerful group trying to exclude the weaker one. Sometimes local officeholders will attempt to exclude ordinary citizens on the ground that the officeholders already represent the community. Sometimes it is just personal dislike. In every case, our response is the same: our principles require democratic participation and secularism. Thus, we always insist that any local individual or group with a sincere desire to participate or a legitimate interest to represent be allowed on the Village Committee.

The issue of female participation varies somewhat depending on the religious and cultural attitudes of the village. Local villagers often propose committees made up solely of men. In this case, we first point out the important interests the women have [schools, child care, medical care, etc.] and the fact that they already play an important role in the community. Based on this, we simply suggest that the men invite women to participate, and they usually do without significant objection.

Occasionally, we proceed even though a woman is not yet part of the committee if we are confident that a woman will be appointed in the near future. We keep the issue in front of the community and have not had any cases where one or more women do not eventually join the committee.

Promoting women's participation is always easier if a women's organization already exists in the village. If there is no such group, we insist on having an active woman in the village participate. We leave it to the village to designate the individual woman but we will usually not proceed with the process until an individual is in place.

THE CLUSTER COORDINATOR

The Coordinator role is a complex one and depends greatly on the readiness and ability of the villagers to carry out the project. In varying degrees, the Coordinator is a facilitator, advisor, communications channel, supervisor of paperwork and construction processes, and mediator. When necessary, these roles are supported by the Project Director and technical staff (both project staff and consultants).

The Coordinator role is not strictly a technical one, and the Coordinator has access to necessary technical expertise such as structural engineers, agronomists, etc. However, we believe it is important for the Coordinator to have significant technical skills. We have found that those skills are useful in them-

selves and having them raises the credibility that the Coordinator needs with local people and contractors. Since our work nearly always includes construction and agricultural activities, all our Coordinators have significant skills in at least one technical field.

The most important characteristic of a good Coordinator is commitment, specifically commitment to do development work according to P.E.A.C.E. principles and values. This calls for a high level of dedication-hours are long, the conditions in the countryside can be difficult, and working with people who sometimes bear resentments and grudges against their neighbors is often stressful.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

As noted earlier, each village and cluster sets its own priorities and out of these priorities the committees propose specific projects. The committees have very wide discretion in the choice of projects. While there is no specific monetary limitation, there has to be a reasonable correspondence between the amount of money spent, and the number of beneficiaries; the larger the number of potential beneficiaries, the more we are willing to spend. Projects have to be within a general mandate, which has been set by USAID. Projects deal with agriculture infrastructure, social infrastructure, environment, and conflict resolution/participation. Committees usually propose projects to improve health, the local environment, education, and to generate income.

Difficulties can arise both over what projects to propose and where they should be located. We never truncate the priority-setting process. The reason is that unless the community comes to consensus on its own, there will not be true buy-in. In that case, problems always come up during implementation and follow-up that are more serious than the initial disagreements. Admittedly, consensus building can be a drawn-out process. We have had occasions when it has taken a year to achieve. Sometimes a village has not been able to reach consensus. In those cases we walk away, always leaving the door open to return at the village's request. Whatever the case, we always proceed with political neutrality.

Once a project has been approved by the committee, it goes into the planning and approval stage. This more-or-less straightforward process uses the appropriate technical personnel (engineers, architects, agronomists, etc.) to translate the committee's project into construction documents to be let out for bid. The committee also starts whatever governmental approval processes (construction permits) that are necessary. This process can be arduous. Sometimes this is so because the government agencies are not responsive. Sometimes what the community wants is at variance with government plans. In these cases, it is often necessary to bring political pressure on agencies to approve the plans. This activity is the responsibility of the Cluster/Village Committee. It is important for the Committee to carry this out because the local communities need to develop expertise in relations with the central government. Indeed, this is an important function of any local entity.

IMPLEMENTING A TECHNICALLY EXCELLENT PROJECT

A sad, if not often mentioned, truth of development projects is that they are often poorly implemented. Development projects in Lebanon are no exception, and many development agencies have poor reputations for quality among the local people. In this context, CMI determined early on that it had to consistently deliver excellent projects through RE.A.C.E. as a matter of pride, to protect the company's reputation, and most important because the villagers deserved it.

The implementation process is complex and detailed and will be described only briefly here. At its core, however, it rests on three legs: independent evaluation of all construction bids; close supervision of construction with appropriate testing; and strict payment provisions to encourage contractor performance. The process also calls for maintenance and follow-up after project completion.

BID EVALUATION

The process begins with an independent evaluation of all bids by the staff structural engineer supplemented by other experts as needed. This detailed process goes beyond the question of choosing the lowest bid. In fact, getting the lowest bid is not the most important goal; getting a contract that reflects true costs is most important because if a bid is too low there will be problems with performance. The structural engineer evaluates the bids and when any specific item is priced either too high or too low he discusses the reasons for the anomaly with the bidder. If the matter cannot be reconciled, the overall bid will not be accepted. Once the lowest bid consistent with true cost and other performance variables (such as previous experience) have been determined, a contract is drawn and construction starts. Often, local contractors try to solicit political parties to support them in winning the bid. Again, "political neutrality" is the mode of operation and only technically acceptable bids win.

SUPERVISION AND MONITORING.

The construction process is very closely monitored by the Coordinator, the staff structural engineer, and local committee members. We supervise and test every concrete pour; we monitor delivery of materials. We inspect all electrical, plumbing, and other systems. Local people, to say nothing of new contractors, are surprised by this level of supervision—the former pleasantly and the latter often unpleasantly surprised. In fact, local people consistently say that they are surprised that the construction gets done on time and they are even more surprised that it is still sound after the winter.

Another important aspect of supervision and monitoring is local participation. We encourage the local committee members to play an active role in supervising the project. We ask them to visit the project at least daily, discuss progress with the contractor, and report any significant problems to us. We

emphasize that the contract is between them and the contractor and that they are ultimately responsible to see that the project meets their community's needs.

CONTRACTOR PAYMENT

Appropriate payment systems are crucial to ensuring quality contractor performance, and CMI's system is designed so that contractors are in the position that their work is always more advanced than their payments. The system works as follows:

- We make no down payments to contractors. The only time we will pay any money up front is for imported materials where the supplier requires payment in advance.
- After the first phase is completed and inspected, the contractor receives half payment for the phase.
- After the second phase is completed, the contractor receives the second if payment for the first phase and if payment for the second.
- This process continues so that the contractor always has his/her own resources invested in the job.
- Any payment is stopped immediately if there is a problem with the work.
- The bottom line is that the contractor is always "in the hole" and so is motivated to complete the work quickly and up to specifications.

MAINTENANCE AND FOLLOW-UP

The last phase of project implementation is maintenance and follow-up. An appropriate schedule for maintenance including mechanical warranties and service contracts where necessary is established. We monitor the maintenance process and advise the Cluster/Village Committee through the life of our project [through March 2003]. On major projects, our Coordinators are always available to the committees to help in issues that come up. For example, CMI will remain available as an administrative support mechanism to the Bee Keeping co-op (see below for description) to help in devising marketing schemes, accounting issues, and instituting additional checks and balances into a given system if it is found necessary after the start of a given operation.

V. RESULTS OF P.E.A.C.E.

The P.E.A.C.E. process may sound good, but the reader should be asking: "Does it work?" The answer is emphatically yes. P.E.A.C.E. completes many projects, does them cheaply, does them fast, and reconciles people effectively. The data below summarizes the P.E.A.C.E. results. The first and second columns show the projects that have been completed as of September, 2000. Development,

professionals who have implemented projects in the field will recognize the high productivity level P.E.A.C.E. has achieved.

Projects Completed by P.E.A.C.E.: 1999-September 2000				
Completion date	Village/Project	Project Value	Value of Local Participation	Local Participation as % of Project Value
September 13, 2000	Khwayyeh Irrigation Canals	\$45,727	\$6,751	15%
August 29, 2000	Chair Irrigation Canals II	\$39,262	\$6,300	16%
May 22, 2000	Boudai Irrigation Canals	\$96,631	\$14,291	15%
April 8, 2000	Mar Chaouie Feeder Road	\$27,198	\$4,644	17%
March 24, 2000	Zahboud & El Khwayyeh Private Water Reservoirs	\$305,853	\$29,000	9%
February 1, 2000	Deir Reba Feeder Road I	\$10,521	\$2,459	23%
January 28, 2000	Douar El Ferman Springs Rehabilitation	\$14,313	\$3,229	23%
December 29, 1999	Deir Kouati Feeder Road	\$10,042	\$4,800	48%
December 27, 1999	Jabboubeh Irrigation Canals II	\$26,865	\$4,400	16%
December 22, 1999	Miydassa Water Reservoirs	\$31,383	\$11,138	35%
December 21, 1999	Nouria Irrigation Network	\$52,626	\$17,530	33%
December 15, 1999	Aamrig Feeder Road Rehabilitation	\$98,305	\$12,604	13%
December 9, 1999	Khar Aamrig Drainage Canals II	\$22,000	\$4,500	20%
November 25, 1999	Chair Feeder Roads and Irrigation Canals	\$59,262	\$11,863	20%
November 4, 1999	Jabboubeh Irrigation Canals I	\$25,893	\$5,392	21%
October 20, 1999	Deir Beta Feeder Road I	\$11,638	\$3,519	30%
September 1, 1999	Khar Aamrig Drainage Canals I	\$19,365	\$4,215	22%
August 26, 1999	Deir Al Ahmar Irrigation Canals	\$42,760	\$8,500	20%
August 19, 1999	Bechouat Irrigation Reservoir II	\$49,336	\$9,800	20%
July 21, 1999	Mihiyeh Irrigation Network	\$139,402	\$31,000	22%
June 9, 1999	El Khwayyeh Feeder Road	\$63,771	\$11,862	19%
May 20, 1999	Deir El Oussous	\$40,582	\$14,300	35%
January 22, 1999	Rouqah Hill Lake	\$258,725	\$166,070	71%
January 22, 1999	Bechouat Reservoir	\$85,978	\$21,750	25%
Total		\$1,479,228	\$369,327	25%

P.E.A.C.E. does projects for little money by leveraging our funds with local contributions. A 20 percent local contribution is required by our agreement with USAID. However, we regularly exceed that because the communities buy into the process completely. The last two columns of the table show the local contributions. Overall, P.E.A.C.E. has achieved a 56 percent local participation rate.

In order to put the P.E.A.C.E. results in perspective, we prepared a comparison between our project and a comparable program run by another international development agency in Lebanon. The Table below shows that the P.E.A.C.E. process accomplished more with less, and quicker, than the comparable program.

Comparing Rural Development Programs		
	Comparable Program	P.E.A.C.E.
Population...	100 million	52.5 million
Number of Projects...	33	49
Years in Operation...	6	2.5
Number of Staff...	45	7

VI. SUCCESS STORIES

THE BARQA HILL LAKE

Once agreed upon by the village or cluster committees, our projects move fast. A good example is the irrigation reservoir constructed at Barqa in the Dekaa [the Barqa Hill Lake].

The village committee identified a water collection reservoir for irrigation as their top priority. The proposal the committee submitted to CAII was for an 8 million gallon concrete reservoir. This would have been too expensive. An investigation by the CAII technical team revealed that using High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) instead of concrete to line the reservoir would have an acceptable cost provided that the local people would contribute the excavation activities as their local contribution.

The committee approved this alternative and the project was planned and completed in 50 working days. The Hill Lake now provides water for 30 hectares during the summer months when no rainwater is available.

Another challenge we faced in this village was initial resistance to the participation of women on the committee. The villagers also argued that women were not physically able to do construction work on the remote reservoir site. At the repeated urging of CAII's field team, the villagers agreed to admit women to both the committee and the construction workforce. One of the two women who joined the committee eventually became the financial coordinator for the project, and the other woman was trained to become a bulldozer operator.

SILFAYA-BEE FARM PROJECT

The PE.A.C.E. reconciliation process works. A good example is our development of a bee farm and honey processing facility in the village of Silfaya.

This project provided the opportunity for communities to improve their economic opportunities, but we made it clear that the project would only go forward if the communities would work together regardless of their past conflicts or current animosities. Silfaya is located in the heart of Mount Lebanon; it is a Christian town that was totally demolished by the Druze forces during the "Mountain Battle" of 1983 during Lebanon's civil war. While construction started when the contract was signed with the Silfaya Cooperative in April of 1999, CAII had already been working closely with the people of the area since the beginning of PE.A.C.E. activities in July of 1998. Our efforts were two-tracked all along: one to facilitate the re-connection of Druze and Christians and another that concentrated on ensuring efficient administration, transparent procurement processes, strict adherence to applicable building codes, and open participatory methods among cooperative members. By using their common economic interest, CAII provided a functional reconciliation option to both sides

of the conflict—they had something to lose if they chose not to cooperate.

The project consists of three sites:

1. The primary apairy with 500 beehives of imported and integrated bees;
2. The secondary apairy, with local bees; and
3. The processing plant for the extraction and packaging of honey.

The initial difficulties of getting people to buy into the reconciliation process slowly gave way to better relations. For example, CAII's field team arranged an introductory meeting between beekeepers from Mejdaya, a Druze town, and cooperative members from the adjacent Christian town of Sittaya. The purpose of the meeting was to establish the first contact between the two communities since the civil war ended. After an awkward first ten minutes, the beekeepers were deep into discussing bee diseases that they were both encountering. Since the communities are so close together, the beekeepers had a strong interest in preventing the spread of bee diseases.

This initial meeting was the key in opening the door for Druze and Maronite beekeepers from all over the Aley and Shouf Clusters to come together in two workshops. CAII and the Sittaya Cooperative were expecting 25 participants at each workshop, but were surprised to see 50 attending the full-day events. The workshops' classroom training was held at the processing plant, and the practical training at the secondary apairy.

There are several additional success stories outlined in Appendix II.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

While the Lebanese have not gone through a national reconciliation process, mostly due to the continuing regional power struggle and the control Syria exerts on Lebanese government decisions, many sectors of the population are moving in that direction. Students from various confessions demonstrate together for common causes, political leaders who were (and maybe are still) enemies now stand up for each other whenever an opportunity arises.

A large part of the credit for progress toward reconciliation can be traced to programs like ours, which have worked with local and also national leaders using the P.E.A.C.E. process methods. Former enemies now train together on bee keeping; others jointly manage their agricultural strategies while all are looking to a Lebanon that can live in peace and spread the values and mechanisms described in this piece.

CAMI believes that the PEACE methods, while useful by themselves, need to be operated on a basis of the 10 Principles outlined previously. As the reader may recall, these are:

1. Strict political neutrality;
2. Transparency/no corruption;
3. Community buy-in;
4. Operation by democratic principles;
5. No financial commitments without money in the bank;
6. Maximum feasible participation of women;
7. Strict secularism;
8. Independence from the central government;
9. Modeling PEACE principles in our own staff and operations; and
10. Technical excellence.

Our experience has been that the PEACE process works most effectively when these principles are the foundation of efforts at reconciliation and sustainable development. In fact, we believe that while the methods we use can be changed and adapted as conditions demand, the PEACE principles must be rigorously applied in order to ensure success. CAMI believes that the methods used by the PEACE program are applicable in many countries—especially those where reconciliation and development need to be integrated. Hopefully, these methods can be used by development professionals to promote sustainable development and national reconciliation.

APPENDIX I CAII Villages

VILLAGE	CLUSTER	CAZA
Ras Baalbeck	Hermel	Baalbeck
El Fakha	Hermel	Baalbeck
El Ain	Hermel	Baalbeck
Jdaide	Hermel	Baalbeck
El Bejaie	Hermel	Baalbeck
Tell Soughe	Hermel	Baalbeck
Zabboud	Hermel	Baalbeck
El Kharayeb	Hermel	Baalbeck
Tellat el Deir	Hermel	Baalbeck
Mouallaka	Hermel	Baalbeck
El Zerch	Hermel	Baalbeck
Jahboulah	Hermel	Baalbeck
Asinota	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Mcheibye	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Der el Ouassine	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Chifa	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Yammouné	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Otodesse	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Boudai	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Zannaneh	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Basyli	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Bet Sloybi	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Bet Merar	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Gurrame	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Bleigha	Yammouné	Baalbeck
Knaissé	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Mchayfe	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Cheat	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Nabha	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
El Geddom	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Berqa	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Bechouat	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Es Safra	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Deir El Ahmar	Deir El Ahmar	Baalbeck
Ghaboun	Aley	Aley
Kfar Aanitney	Aley	Aley
Sitayo	Aley	Aley
Mejdaya	Aley	Aley
Dfoun	Aley	Aley
Remhala	Aley	Aley
Chartoun	Aley	Aley
Dousir El Remhala	Aley	Aley
Bou Zreidah	Aley	Aley
Jisr El Kadi	Aley	Aley

VILLAGE	CLUSTER	CAZA
Ochetfine	Shouf	Shouf
Khar Faqoud	Shouf	Shouf
Khar Getra	Shouf	Shouf
Deir Beba	Shouf	Shouf
Dmit	Shouf	Shouf
El Knayseh	Shouf	Shouf
Aammiq	Shouf	Shouf
Deir Koushi	Shouf	Shouf
Darb es Sim	Maghdouche	Saida
Zaghdeiney	Maghdouche	Saida
Taribourt	Maghdouche	Saida
Maghdouche	Maghdouche	Saida
Aanoun	Maghdouche	Saida
Aarab Tabbeysa	Maghdouche	Saida
Aarab el Jall	Maghdouche	Saida
Houmme El Tahus	Maghdouche	Saida
Serba	Maghdouche	Saida
Houmme El Fouqa	Maghdouche	Saida
Jerjouse	Maghdouche	Saida
Aarab Selim	Maghdouche	Saida
El Louaize	Maghdouche	Saida
El Miye ou Miye	Jbaa	Saida
Ain ed Delb	Jbaa	Saida
El Qraie	Jbaa	Saida
El Mjeidil	Jbaa	Saida
Khar Hatta	Jbaa	Saida
Khar Melki	Jbaa	Saida
Khar Bet	Jbaa	Saida
Khar Chial	Jbaa	Saida
Jemerey	Jbaa	Saida
Bou Glaya	Jbaa	Saida
Khar Fila	Jbaa	Saida
Jbaa	Jbaa	Saida
Ain Bou Gouar	Jbaa	Saida
Ain Gana	Jbaa	Saida
Ras El Ain	Naqoura	Sour
El Mansouri	Naqoura	Sour
El Biyadu	Naqoura	Sour
Majdel Zoun	Naqoura	Sour
En Naqoura	Naqoura	Sour
Aulma ech Chawab	Naqoura	Sour
Chamasa	Naqoura	Sour
Chihine	Naqoura	Sour
El Jibtein	Naqoura	Sour
Tair Harfa	Naqoura	Sour
Labboune	Naqoura	Sour

APPENDIX II P.E.A.C.E. PROJECT SUCCESS STORIES

YAMMOUNE PUBLIC SCHOOL RECONSTRUCTION



A reconstructed classroom.

The priority project chosen by the village committee was reconstruction of the local public school. This activity consisted of demolishing the old building and constructing a new 11-room facility. The Lebanese Government had already completed building 4 out of the 15 needed rooms.

Approximately 300 students would have access to a rehabilitated school with a greatly improved learning environment. The major challenge faced by CAII was resolving a major internal conflict among town residents originating from local political issues. CAII staff worked as mediators to bring both parties together; after several months of sustained efforts, the two parties settled their differences for the well-being of the community and were able to work together as one team.

DEIR EL AHMAR COLD STORAGE FACILITY PROJECT

The Deir El Ahmar and Yammoune Clusters make up 22 villages, which are adjacent to each other, and share the same problems and needs for irrigation, potable water, and enhanced crop marketing. In these clusters, apple and potato farmers are at the mercy of merchants who dictate low purchase prices. If the farmers do not sell at this price, their crops go to waste due to lack of resources for refrigeration.



The Cold Storage Facility under construction.

Village committees independently articulated the need for a cold storage facility to serve the whole area. CAII realized that such a large number of villages would need a coalition of all the cooperatives in the area to plan and manage the cold storage facility construction and operation. CAII staff and representatives of the agricultural cooperatives met several times and successfully established a coalition of 14 cooperatives, named The Agricultural Cooperative Union (ACU).

By facilitating meetings among the various cooperatives in the region, CAII was once again putting the functional reconciliation process to work. As in the bee-keeping coop of Gifaya, we showed the villagers that there was more to lose than to gain by working against each other. Forming the union was a considerable accomplishment, since the main groups involved were Shites and Maronites of the Deir El

Ahmari and Yammounie villages, who had a history of years of sectarian charged conflict, in an upstream-downstream water rights context.

The ACU has worked on numerous issues, including pressuring the GOL to grant the needed construction permits, which is often a highly political and sometimes corrupt process. In this case it took two years! The ACU also led to other benefits whereby the members are working together on other common agricultural issues in a very professional manner, as well as using the union to resolve disputes in the various villages of the clusters.

The cold storage facility provides the apple and potato farmers of the area with initial storage volume for 35,000 cases along with an expansion capacity of up to 100,000 cases.

INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL INCOME PROJECTS

The inter-cluster Cold Storage Facility and the community-specific Barqa Hill Lake Project are among the many examples of CAII's overall "water resource management/agricultural income opportunities" development work in the Bekaa. This integrated approach provides the villages of the Deir El Ahmar and Yammounie Clusters with a network of technically excellent projects that address their needs within available resources while maximizing potential opportunities through training workshops, which raise individual and collective farming skills.

Another such example is the Ain El Naanaa Project; it is a 7km irrigation main that connects to the Deir El Ahmar Potable Water Supply Network and joins the Mchabiyeh Irrigation Network Project, thereby providing a sufficient source of supplemental water during the water scarce months of the year. The participation of the villagers required a huge coordination effort by the committee in order to maximize the participation of the many farmers needed to work on the project. 250 farmers of the agricultural cooperative are benefiting from this project. A total of 200 hectares have improved irrigation and another 200 were brought under irrigation. In addition, 1000 families from the Deir El Ahmar town and surrounding communities have access to improved supplies of potable water.

Improving farmers' technical capacity was identified by the Union of Co-Ops as a much-needed step towards improving apple crops after the construction of a cold storage facility was underway. CAII, in collaboration with the Union, organized a week of field visits for Professor Robert Belding, a pomology expert at Rutgers University in New Jersey, during the blooming season of 2000. The objectives were to observe the tree apple industry in North West Bekaa, assess current apple production practices, and identify weak areas that could be improved for economic gain and community opportunity expansion.



THE COMPLETED FORM OF THE DEIR EL AHMAR FACILITY

Following this trip, soil and leaf samples were collected by the CAAI agricultural engineer and sent to the US for analysis. Further steps include a second visit during the fruiting season of 2001, which would build on previously collected information and provide an overall plan for improving the apple growing industry in the area.

On all projects, CAAI insists on technical excellence in design and implementation. This was manifested, for example, after the completion of 2000 meters of irrigation canals in Chast, whereby the Ministry of Hydraulic and Electric Resources sent its engineers to the town municipality to investigate CAAI's specifications for the purpose of adopting them as Lebanese Government Standards.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

All the above-mentioned projects have institution building as an integral part of the desired outcome. The role of the community, or more accurately the interactions between CAAI and each cluster, has been central to the success of the project. Improving institutional capacities is key to successful cluster work, and is arguably the single most important outcome for the Lebanon and this project. For, in truth, an irrigation canal is just an irrigation canal; but institutions and processes, which enable communities to produce a canal and any other project in a technically excellent, transparent and participatory method, are what ensures sustainable development.

The procurement procedures, bidding processes, and selection criteria for any project are made in collaboration between CAAI and the local committee. This provides hands on training mechanism for municipalities, agricultural co-ops, and local social clubs to learn how to run their other issues. After completing the Deir El Ahmar irrigation network for example, which was partially funded by the municipality, municipal board members informed CAAI that they were now using procurement and bidding systems used in the project for other activities they were implementing.

In communities where the existing institutions are dormant or ineffective, CAAI either activates or supports the creation of a new one for the implementation of a project. Such was the case with the apricot processing plant in the Hermel Cluster. CAAI suggested the formation of one cooperative for all the villages or to inspect the existing non-effective cooperatives. General meetings for farmers in the area were held in collaboration with the Ministry of Cooperatives where more than 50 farmers attended and cooperation concepts were fully discussed. The farmers opted to form a new cooperative instead of strengthening an existing one because they felt the existing cooperatives had a political bias that would not allow success.

The formation of the new coop allowed the members to begin training on management of projects. Their capacity building will continue, as is the case in the cold storage facility, bee farm, and the Bchetfine sewer network, during the construction and operational start-up phase.

ABOUT CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII) is a private, professional services firm headquartered in Washington, DC. Since its inception in 1977, CAII has assisted governments, communities, non-governmental organizations, and private companies worldwide, to lead and manage change. We implement our projects through our three divisions: Communities in Transition; Education, Mobilization, and Communication; and Analysis and Information Management.

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For more information on CAII, visit us at www.caill.net. For more information on the P.E.A.C.E. Project, visit the Project's web site at www.caill.net/peace.

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