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development in rural areas of Lebanon*

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**Power, Politics and Prestige: the Business of INGO  
Development in Rural Areas of Lebanon**

Christine Ann Crumrine

PhD Thesis

The University of Durham

Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

**21 MAY 2003**

## ABSTRACT

Today, in post-war Lebanon, INGOs are in a transitional phase moving from relief to full-scale development organisations. Lebanon is a multi-communal state and has witnessed numerous internal and regional conflicts that many times have turned violent. The culture is marked by persisting primary, familial, and religious identities with a high penetration of patron-client relationships.

In my thesis, I attempted to address a central and compound research question: Do select and specific INGO programmes produce the desired results stated by their personnel, programme/project outlines and mission statements; and to what extent do their projects and programmes in rural development in Lebanon in specific cases meet the needs and expectations from the perspective of local men and women who are the intended beneficiaries?

In order to answer the question above, more than 400 interviews were conducted (1998-1999), the bulk of which were with local beneficiaries. Open-ended questions via semi-structured interviews with individuals and groups were the primary means of field data collection.

According to local men and women living in rural areas of Lebanon who spoke to me, the INGO programmes that I looked at did not satisfy their development needs for a number of reasons; however, due to the near absence of state-led development, they are forced to be reliant on a combination of rare, if any, state programmes, INGO and local NGO programmes, local political agents (political parties, warlords, landlords, local strong-men, confessional leaders and power-brokers) for what scant developmental assistance they can get. The result is uncoordinated and sporadic development projects, many of which fail to reach their targeted clientele due to bureaucracy, corruption, lack of co-ordination and resources, the internal agendas of the providers themselves, the impact of international political demands/actions, and a fragmented and weak state.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGO	Anti-Government Organisation
AMAL	Afouage al-Moukawama al-Loubnaniyah
AUB	American University of Beirut
AO	Associational Organisation
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CADEC	Catholic Development Commission
CARE	Committee for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CERMOC	Centre d'études et Recherche du Moyen Orient
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CO	Charitable Organisation
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee, (OECD)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DONGO	Donor Governmental Organisation
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
EEC	European Economic Community
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ESCWA	UN Economic and Social Council for Western Asia
GANGO	Gap-filling Organisation
GCLW	General Confederation of Lebanese Workers
GO	Grassroots Organisation
GRO	Grassroots Organisation
GONGO	Governmental Non-governmental Organisation
ICNPO	International Classification of Non-profit Organisations
IDENGO	International Classification of Development NGOs
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
IO	Independent Organisation
IRFED	Institution for Research and Education for Development
JRP	Joint Relief Programme

NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NNGO	Northern Non-governmental Organisation
NOVIB	Netherlands Organization for International Development
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSC	Public Service Contractors
PSO	Public Service Organisation
PSP	Progressive Socialist Party
PVDO	Private Voluntary Development Organisation
PVO	Private Voluntary Organisation
QUANGO	Quasi-non-governmental Organisation
RDC	Rural Development Council
SCAIL	Société Libanaise de Crédit Agricole et Industriel du Liban
SNA	UN System of National Accounts
SNGO	Southern Non-governmental Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USJ	Université Saint Joseph
VO	Voluntary Organisation
WB	World Bank
WCC	World Council of Churches
WFP	World Food Programme

## Arabic Translations

**Bek:** a person of notable rank (originally Turkish)

**Bey:** a person of notable rank (Egyptian pronunciation of **Bek**)

**Dai'a:** village

**Damman:** sharecropper

**Darrak:** police officers

**Mokhabarat:** secret service personnel

**Wasta:** a personal contact that exerts influence or acts as a broker

**Zaim:** a leader

**Zu'ama:** a group of leaders

## DEDICATION

To my grandmother Margery J. Stemen

## INTRODUCTION

What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve about

Old English Proverb

Though some theorists may be writing the obituary for development as an intellectual concept (Sachs 1992, Rahmena 1997), its critical point of action is alive and well for individual practitioners and organisations involved in the attempt to better the lives of those less well endowed with the basic needs for survival and personal growth. Regardless of the realities, positive or negative, development continues to be redefined and tested throughout the globe. Whether as a prospective career choice or support for various organisations and developing countries' governments, promises of building a better future through development remain a powerful attraction for the continuation and growth of this phenomenon. In fact, interest in development in the last decade has witnessed increased enthusiasm from donor and funding agencies, which have channelled enormous sums of money into programmes and projects, especially those managed by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs).

My initial interest in NGOs was stimulated during my graduate and post-graduate studies by several professors who were interested in the political, economic and social transformations taking place in the developing world. This inspiration led me to look at deeper questions regarding the 'NGO revolution' in poverty alleviation. One of the most striking features I encountered in reading about the subject in 1996 was that many analyses of INGOs consisted of INGO and donor reflections of themselves as a measure of their contribution to the advancement of poor men and women's lives. Only in very rare occasions were the perceptions of the intended beneficiaries mentioned or considered at the time. This project instead starts with the impressions of the intended 'beneficiaries' concerning INGO programmes as the principal gauge of effectiveness in developing their areas and easing their poverty.

The aim of this thesis was to discover whether specific INGO projects and programmes met the development needs of local men and women, who were the intended beneficiaries. This was accomplished through conducting interviews with people living in villages where these specific INGO projects/programmes were taking place. Additionally,

interviews were conducted with various INGO personnel, government officials and other individuals and organisations involved in working in development in Lebanon.

This work shows that these specific INGO projects were not able to meet the development needs of local people, but due to many factors, local men and women were forced to rely on these programmes for what scant development assistance they do get.

The decision to choose Lebanon as a case study was based firstly, on my familiarity with the country's history and culture, and my access to local contacts, as I had lived there previously for four years. Secondly, as Lebanon had been the site of 16 years of civil war, it was natural to postulate that it would be a rich working environment for INGOs concerned with post-war development, including the rebuilding of fractured societies and poverty alleviation. And lastly, though the literature covering NGOs in development is vast, there remains a great paucity of information concerning the work of NGOs in the Middle East. This study is intended to contribute empirically to this immense and unfortunate deficiency.

Rural areas in Lebanon were specifically chosen as a focal point for the study because they tend to be the most impoverished and least visible regions in developing countries, and Lebanon is no exception. Moreover, as INGOs stated *raison d'être* is to alleviate poverty, I anticipated that many of their programmes and projects would be taking place in rural areas.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the reader to the NGO movement, illustrating the power and immensity of their place in the international development scene, before attempting to define these conceptually elusive organisations. This chapter also introduces a definition of the role that NGOs could play in development, as well as their expanding function within the post Cold War development agenda.

Chapter Two is a basic historical, socio-economic and geo-political overview of Lebanon. It intends to provide the reader with an introductory framework of the complex interwoven fabric of Lebanese culture and society so that one can better comprehend the ambience that the INGOs in Lebanon are working in. In addition, this chapter also traces the history of and the current predicament of INGOs working in Lebanon.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology utilised in the fieldwork, and attempts to give an illustration of the strategy used to observe and collect the data presented in this study. The following chapter introduces the seven INGOs, whose projects and programmes were looked at in rural areas of Lebanon.

Chapter Five contains the bulk of the fieldwork data that was gathered from local men and women living in rural communities, most of which were the intended 'beneficiaries' of INGO development programmes and projects<sup>1</sup>. My rural fieldwork was a very enlightening and enriching experience. It provided me with an opportunity to view the development process from the perspective of local men and women who live far from the skyscrapers and office blocks where all of the decisions regarding development are made.

Chapter Six presents further fieldwork material, but mainly consists of an attempt at an analysis of the data gathered. Relationships between the State, donors, INGOs and 'beneficiaries' are also explored and analysed, by looking at concepts of accountability, transparency, levels of

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<sup>1</sup> The bulk of the fieldwork took place in 1998.

participation and evaluation. The complex web of interconnected socio-economic and geo-political factors affecting the development process are observed and examined.

The final chapter presents a synopsis of the entire thesis, reiterating the main analytical notions of my fieldwork.

It is hoped that this work will encourage other scholars to continue to explore the many facets of the development process, taking into consideration the perspective of local men and women who are considered to be the 'ultimate intended beneficiaries' of development projects and programmes.

## CHAPTER ONE

### LOCATING INGOs WITHIN THE DISCOURSE ON DEVELOPMENT

*As governments absent themselves from social leadership and the power of the unaccountable increases, so civil society emerges from the bottom, hungry for global justice and radical social change. It is led by non government groups which bypass the centre, inform themselves of the issues and appeal directly to the grassroots. They are society's new moral and social watchdogs, filling the vacuum of ideas and energy at the centre.*

*The Guardian ('Links'), 20 November 1996*

This first chapter of the thesis locates non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including international NGOs (INGOs), in the process of development by examining NGOs as part of the overall international development apparatus. It will then explore various definitions and theories of why NGOs perform tasks that have traditionally been the responsibility of states, before examining their significance within the discourse on development. The chapter will conclude with a look at the political, social and economic objectives that have been set by the international development community as criteria for sustainable development in a global environment dominated by democratic political structures and market driven economies. It should be noted, that given the time lag between the generation of ideas in the literature and their actual transference to NGO personnel on the ground, the debates regarding NGOs in development in this

chapter will largely be limited to the pre-1996 period since this was the material most relevant in the field at the time of my study.<sup>1</sup>

The emergence and recognition of NGOs as an important phenomenon in the political economy of development has received vast amounts of attention from academics in various fields, development practitioners and government personnel. They have been claimed to be the front-line forces of 'neutral' intervention and are linked more than ever to the wider aid community -the UN, other multinational bodies and international governments - in a manner that could not have been foreseen in the days when NGOs simply filled the gaps at a grassroots level. One analyst predicts that 'as public spending on international affairs and overseas aid is gradually and sometimes radically being reduced in most donor countries, the relative importance of NGOs within the aid system will continue to grow' (Tvedt 1998:2). Significantly, bilateral government donors increasingly channel resources for emergencies and development through their favoured NGOs rather than through allegedly less accountable governments of the South. This change has not gone unnoticed by developing country governments who have had to compete with this sector for development aid.

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<sup>1</sup> The present tense will be used for this discussion.

The institutional recognition of the role of NGOs did have a political aspect. The major donor organizations did see NGOs as a way of bypassing Third World state machines that they saw as inefficient or corrupt. The place of NGOs within the overall context of institutional development work is consequently somewhat ambiguous so far as recipient states are concerned (Preston 1996:313).

These are indeed political implications, which are not only a by-product of aid transfers, but also are intentional decisions taken by foreign governments and the two main Washington-based institutions; the IMF and the World Bank.

#### **A. Searching for Definitions: What are development NGOs?**

The rise of NGOs on the world development scene is an important phenomenon that has implications for the development prospects of poor people, for the future of these organisations themselves, and for the wider political economy of which they form a small but growing part. What lies behind these trends? Why have NGOs and INGOs been given so much responsibility and where is this process heading? Before answering these questions, it is important to first define what we mean by international development NGO. The next two sections present the various definitions in current use as well as theories concerning the possible origins of these particular organisations.

The term non-governmental organisation (NGO) is a loose term and at its broadest encompasses every sort of organisation outside the public and private sectors. Uphoff concludes that it could even include private, for-profit enterprises; i.e., market institutions (1993:603). Clark locates six categories of organisations (relief and welfare agencies, technical innovation organisations, public service contractors, popular development organisations, grassroots development organisations and advocacy groups and networks) and calls them all NGOs (1991:34-5). He himself admits that this all inclusiveness can render the term almost meaningless. There exists a good deal of conceptual ambiguity regarding whether NGOs are a subset of the private non-profit service sector, or whether they in fact constitute a separate and distinct third sector. The Central Evaluation Unit of the United Nations has coined an essentialistic definition which includes 'professional associations, foundations, trade unions and business associations', as well as 'research institutes dealing with international affairs and associations of parliamentarians'. This definition fails to recognise registration differences between countries and therefore makes country comparisons difficult. For instance, in some states trade unions, business associations and research

institutions are forbidden from registering as NGOs, whilst in others they are not (United Nations, Central Evaluation Unit 1993).

### 1. NGOs in the Aid Channel: a common denominator?

Tvedt moves to delineate the term NGO as 'a common denominator for all organizations within the aid channel that are institutionally separated from the state apparatus and are non-profit-distributing' (1998:16). He points out that community based organisations (CBOs), grassroots organisations (GROs), private voluntary organisations (PVOs) international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), northern non-governmental organisations (NNGOs), southern non-governmental organisations (SNGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) are all sub-categories, but are still NGOs.

Based on the fact that the term NGO is widely used and understood within the wider development community to mean organisations involved in the aid channel, it can be employed in different countries in different development contexts. This definition will also help to exclude organisations that are described as NGOs in policy documents and research papers, but which are not NGOs. For instance, the Grameen Bank is often lauded as an NGO in donor and NGO

circles, but it is not an NGO—it is a bank. Albeit the Grameen Bank is a different kind of bank, it receives money from the Bangladeshi Government and foreign governments as a bank, not as an NGO. Furthermore, this term is useful in analysing 'organizational hybrids'. Many NGOs combine several characteristics, including a strong market orientation with a strong social commitment, with part of its activities engaged in contract work for the state and other parts devoted entirely to volunteer work and independent. Tvedt asserts that introducing DONGOS, QUANGOS or GONGOS as distinctive categories is not useful, as they are really just sub-classes of NGOs.

Importantly, this term also makes it easier to analyse development NGOs as part of an international aid system, 'and also to examine how they articulate with donor communities, state administrations and different types of non-profit organization[s], and...allows for fruitful analyses of how other NGOs and NGOs in the aid system interact and influence each other, since the distinction between them is systemic rather than definitional' (Tvedt op. cit.: 18).

For the purposes of this study, my work focuses on international development NGOs, as described and defined above, engaged in various development activities and issues located specifically in rural areas of Lebanon.

Though these organisations may put forward divergent solutions, they share common elements in their stated commitment to promoting self-reliance through a wide range of projects and programmes. The specific organisations that were included in this study were defined as non-profit distributing, institutionally separated from the state and part of the international aid channel.

### **B. Searching for Origins: Why do development NGOs exist?**

This section examines various theories concerning the origins of NGOs in order to conceptualise why they exist in the global industrial-capitalist system. There is a considerable amount of literature dedicated to economic theories of the non-profit sector, which include theories on the role of NGOs and their behaviour (Hansmann 1987; and Rose-Ackerman 1980). Generally the phenomenology of NGOs is explained by the failure of the state and the market. Several influential theories have been put forward within an economic perspective to explain the rise of the 'voluntary' sector. The *public goods theory* or the 'performance failure theory' states that NGOs exist in order to satisfy the residual unsatisfied demand for public goods in society. It argues that the state tends to provide public goods only at the level that satisfies the average person. Where a significant minority

wants a kind or a level of public goods for which majority support is lacking, NGOs step in to fill the gap (see Weisbrod, 1988). James (1990) derives from this theory that the more heterogeneous a society is, the larger this other organisational arena is likely to be.

Another important theory is *contract failure theory*, which suggests that NGOs arise where ordinary contractual mechanisms do not provide the public with adequate means to ensure the reliability of producers (Hansmann 1987). When contracts are difficult to define people will trust non-profit organisations more than commercial firms, because the former are seen as having fewer incentives to take advantage of the customers ignorance.

An influential World Bank book on NGOs (Paul and Israel 1991) describes such functional perspectives as being useful also in explaining NGOs in development aid and Third World development in general. In their contribution to the book, Brown and Korten argue that since markets tend to be 'especially vulnerable to failure in developing countries', organisations might, as remedies for market failures, be particularly relevant there' (Brown and Korten 1991:47). They also bring in a different perspective, what is called the *lens of political analysis*. This tends to focus on the role of NGOs in filling niches created by

government failure, particularly in the production of public goods. NGOs exist primarily because of the 'reality of social diversity and otherwise unmet needs for experimentation and flexibility' (ibid.). It is problematic for governments to respond effectively to social diversity, since this will create different constituencies making different or contradictory demands for services. NGOs therefore arise as a response to a situation where people are sovereign but diverse - with competing and sometimes contradictory wishes. This theory stipulates that where there are many competing and contradictory wills, a great number of NGOs will eventually grow up to meet and institutionalise this social diversity (Douglas 1987). Brown and Korten also point out that 'a widely recognised failure of large-scale government bureaucracies is their inflexibility and conservatism'. This political form of state failure creates a situation in which NGOs emerge as innovative responses to novel problems, because of their abilities for experimentation and flexibility (Brown and Korten 1991:48). In other words, NGOs evolve because state mechanisms are unable to perform adequately in order to provide basic services for their constituencies. Voluntary action is seen as an 'adaptive response to the constraints of the majority rule and equitable distribution criteria of the state' (Paul and Israel 1991:4).

These analysts see NGOs as everything that governments are not: unburdened with large bureaucracies, relatively flexible and open to innovation, more effective and faster at implementing development efforts, and able to identify and respond to grass-roots needs (Edwards & Hulme 1996a, Fowler 1988, FAO 1994). The common assertion that NGOs have arisen in the face of internal and external exigencies and where state-directed change has failed or faces severe limitations (Adam 1993, Ndegwa 1993) supports the view that NGOs are an important alternative to the state under some circumstances. As the World Bank (1991:135) has noted, NGOs 'have become an important force in the development process [mitigating] the costs of developing countries' institutional weakness'.

However, Tvedt argues that these theories may be useful to describe non-profit niches in industrialised, capitalist countries, but are not useful to describe the emergence of the variety of roles of NGOs in non-industrialised, developing countries. He argues using Norway as a model for a donor country that in many cases INGOs are in fact donor-state initiatives and not a response to state or market failures in developing countries. The introduction and rise of the INGO sector 'were brought about by conscious government decisions' (1998:45-46).

In the early 1960s – when government to government aid was undisputed as the main and best form of aid – they were invited into the arena by the state and did not occupy a niche in competition with other sectors. The initial government decision gave the voluntary organizations a well defined role: they were to co-operate in government programmes and preferably to carry out their own projects, but more importantly their main task was to help broaden the support among the Norwegian public for development aid in Norway in general. The state deliberately involved them in order to achieve a broader aim: the internationalization of Norwegian society.

The emergence of aid as a project, including the plan to involve voluntary organisations with government support came from consecutive US governments in the post-World War II period. Though US president Harry S. Truman proposed the 'Point Four' programme. In 1946 his administration already wanted 'to tie together the government and private programs in the field of foreign aid'. In that same year he appointed an Advisory Committee on Voluntary Aid attached to the Department of State composed of representatives from voluntary organisations and the government (Smith 1990:45-46). This initiated an era of co-operation between US NGOs and the State Department, which continues to the present day. The general argument from the government and the Congress has been that support for private organisations would heighten their visibility and thereby, it was hoped, increase support for all foreign assistance programmes,

governmental and private (ibid.). In addition, the help would more efficiently reach the most needy (bypassing corrupt governments, and UN organisations, where the Soviets had a hand in the administration of resources, which could mean setbacks during the Cold War), and would also act as a useful channel for getting rid of surplus agricultural produce as food aid. The majority of American NGOs accepted their role, and were important supporters of American policy during the Korean and Vietnam wars.<sup>2</sup> Since the US government asked its allies in 1962 to start giving support to voluntary or private organisations in order to widen and deepen the support for official development aid in the donor countries, all Western governments have adopted a policy of public support for development NGOs. The size of the support varies, as does the year when various Western governments began to pursue this policy, but during the 1980s most states had established their own national NGO channels.

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<sup>2</sup> CARE, the Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, the American Red Cross, Lutheran World relief among others were all active in Vietnam, with considerable support from the US Government. A delegation of representatives from different organisations visited Saigon in 1965, when President Johnson was about to step up the war effort. They declared that the role of the voluntary agencies, 'whose programs vary considerably from one to another, is supplemental to that of the government... There should be no slackening of support for both types of activity, governmental and private, especially since they are working in increasingly close and effective

## 1. NGO origins and state relationships in some developing countries

Terje Tvedt carried out research and collected empirical data on NGO origins and government relations in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Zimbabwe. What he found was that there is no doubt that all of these countries have experienced market and state failures—and that there are a great many niches that need to be filled—and can be filled—however, this does not automatically lead to NGO involvement. These problems have existed for a long time. Who has filled them at a certain point in time 'is not decided by the market or the sector's comparative advantages, but is primarily affected by decisions taken by donor governments', along with developing country governments, and 'the ability of NGO leaders and potential NGO founders to communicate with donors' (op.cit.:50). He shows that developing country governments and NGOs are competing (and collaborating), 'but the prize is not so much market niches or political gains as foreign funds' (ibid). In the end, neither Tvedt or state failure theorists provide the complete answer to the question of NGO origin and remains a topic of contention.

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collaboration' (D.Marr, 'The politics of charity, *Indochinese Chronicle* (October-November, 1974, cited in Smith 1990: 65).

### **C. Development and INGOs: Discourse and Experience**

In order to comprehensively analyse NGOs in development; one must first attempt to define development. Additionally it is important to conceptualise the gradual transition towards promoting NGOs in development through the use of various theories, policies and agendas, which have come from major lending and donor institutions.

The level of development for a country is usually related to national income accounts. However, critics of modern economic theory point out that national income accounts do not reveal how income is distributed either socially or territorially. They do not indicate how aggregate growth affects different groups of people or different regions in a country. Because of the focus on these aggregate figures and the information they provide on macro-economic performance and balances or imbalances, the theories using them as central inputs tend to treat countries as far more homogeneous and economically integrated than they really are.

Moreover, conventional measures of economic growth are often misleading and do not present an accurate picture of the total production of a society. Specifically three major types of productive activities are not accurately

reflected in national accounts statistics, that is subsistence activities in agriculture, forestry and fisheries; activities in the so-called informal sector, including some illegal activities; and household production activities. It can also be added that conventional measures of national income do not count the costs of environmental destruction or the consumption of non-renewable or non-durable sources of energy.

Seers defines development as 'the realization of the potential of human personality' (Seers 1972:122). He explains that if we look at what is absolutely necessary to achieve this, the obvious answer is enough food. Moreover, since the ability to have enough food is subject to factors of income, then 'the criterion can be expressed in terms of income levels'. The second basic necessity for development is a job. The third factor in development is equality, and this he says 'should... be considered an objective in its own right...' (ibid.:124).

The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development", even if the per capita income doubled (ibid.).

Importantly, he adds a footnote that in many ways applies to Lebanon:

Of course, the fulfillment of human potential requires much that cannot be specified in purely economic terms. I cannot spell out all the other requirements, but it would be very unbalanced if I did not mention them at all. They include adequate educational levels, freedom of speech, and citizenship of a nation that is truly independent, both economically and politically, in the sense that the views of other governments do not largely predetermine his own government's decisions (ibid.:128-129).

Seers' theories fit into the category of 'alternative' development theories along with Amartya Sen (1988), Paul Streeten (1982), and Mahbub ul Haq (1995) (among others) up to 1995. They have rejected economic growth as an end in itself and have aimed to redefine the goals of development. These theorists have contended that welfare and human development along with increased choices are of a higher order and should be the ultimate goals of development. Included with the significance of human development is an increased concern for the need to address the causes of poverty and inequality; therefore these theorists conceive of 'development' as various processes which have different meanings and implications for different people.

#### **D. Development Theory: from growth and spontaneous order to public alternatives**

Defining development, though controversial, has been easier to achieve than its actual accomplishment on the ground. This section of the thesis aims to briefly trace the theories that led to the recognition of NGOs, including INGOs, as important sources for economic, political and social change. This work explores trends up to and including the New Policy Agenda. Changes in theory or debate that occurred after 1996 will not be explored.

The history of Third World development has been traced to the post-Second World War era (Escobar 1995) when the First World was becoming increasingly concerned with the lack of economic development in those countries distinguished from themselves and the Second World or communist states. Development theorists from both developed and developing countries have proposed distinctive interventions within the context of the global industrial-capitalist system aimed at contributing to the overall global social system.

Initially, theoretical work used growth theory as its main development ethos. Later this was expressed in two widely dissimilar rationales: modernisation theory and institutional theory. Preston (1996: 318) explains that:

The former was an influential delimited-formal ideology within the Cold War period and was embraced by the institutions of global industrial-capitalism whereas the latter found a base in the organisations of the United Nations.

From this standpoint, the United Nations also provided a global platform for other development theories, including dependency theory. Dependency theory was constructed in the Latin American countries beginning in the 1960s and was expressed via the various state apparatuses and the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), a UN agency. Dependency theory was a distinctive theory that stressed the linking of structure and agency. The main thrust of dependency theory was that the current predicament of the Third World was a product of those political, socio-economic, and cultural configurations associated with the development of the industrial-capitalist global system. The configurations that surround the developing countries are claimed to have developed over a period of time according to the interests of the major metropolitan core countries much to the detriment of the developing 'dependent' countries. The ECLA in particular characterised the world as divided into the centre (the industrialised North) and the periphery (underdeveloped agricultural South) (Frank 1967). This relationship was determined by the world economy, which was created to favour those

countries in the North. The ECLA's solution was to promote industrialisation via protectionism along with import substitution and an interventionist role for the state in economic management and infrastructural development. This was done in the hope that these programmes would reduce Latin America's vulnerability to sharp swings in international commodity prices.

Industrialisation actually made Latin American countries more, not less, vulnerable to the shifting of the world market. In the 1970s, the ECLA's development plans were abandoned and the militarist regimes that were in power followed monetarist policies that served to open rather than protect domestic economies.

The New Right ushered in the 1980s with theories that included a strong resurgence of economic liberalism and the spontaneous order of the marketplace. Sometimes labelled the 'counter-revolution', the New Right theories found acceptance within the Washington-based institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, both long-time supporters of market solutions to development problems. The main principles of the New Right were expounded by economists Friedrich von Hayek (1944) and Milton Friedman. New Right theorists stressed:

a) the establishment of the minimum state and the related freeing of market forces with privatization, deregulation, and sharply reduced government spending; b) the removal of socio-political inhibitions to market functions with repression of trades unions, removal of welfare legislation, and relaxation of government controls on private firms; c) the encouragement of enterprise with tax breaks for business, the affirmation of the right to manage, and the promulgation of ideas of popular capitalism; and d) the opening up of the economy to the wider global system with the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, and the free movement of capital (Preston op.cit.: 322).

The period following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of newly independent eastern European states (1989-91) has been met with a sequence of phases from the New Right theorists based in the North:

a) celebrations of victory; b) the deployment of recipes for rapid marketisation; c) a muted and puzzled recognition of failure; and d) the slow growth of a realistic social scientific approach to these issues (ibid.: 258).

In the developing countries the ideology of the New Right governed the main institutions of capitalist development: the IMF and the World Bank. These institutions pressed the developing world for:

a) the elimination of market imperfections, thus the removal of controls on the private sector, the privatisation of state assets, the liberalisation of foreign investment regulations and so on; b) the elimination of market-inhibitory social institutions and practices, thus curbing trades unions and professions, abolishing various subsidies, liberalising employment regulation and so on; c) the elimination of surplus government intervention, thus the imposition of restrictions on government spending, the reduction in government regulative activity, the reduction of government planning activity, the abolition of tariff regimes and so on; d) it might be noted that such programmes of liberalisation have usually required parallel programmes of political repression (ibid.: 260).

A salient point that Preston rightly points out is that a great deal of political repression was needed in order to implement IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programmes. In many cases, NGOs were among the only organisations allowed to function in civil society outside of the formal state apparatus. As became obvious later, the implementation of economic growth policies without coterminous policies of socio-political development is disastrous.

By the late 1980s it was clear that debates on development theory in the First World had reached an impasse (Schuurman 1996). Also at this time many development theories were being reworked and a return to concepts of the technical expert discipline, with planning as its central theme, were beginning to appear again in the mainstream of social theory with its central theme being the

illumination of the dynamics of social change, once an integral part of dependency theory. Importantly, during the period 1989-91 the political and intellectual climate fundamentally changed, and these changes supported a total reworking of development discourse.

It is important to note that debates concerning structural adjustment have limited relevance to the country under in this thesis. Lebanon has had a laissez-faire economy since its creation.

### 1. Complex Change: a new approach to development

The legacy of dependency theories has continued to persist, and responses such as technical planning are held up as important tools of development for countries in the South as it is still argued that these countries exist in a system which is structurally flawed. This view has met with some general criticism as sweeping structural explanations miss the importance of local actors.

In simple terms, it is suggested that as development plans are always translated into practice at the local level then a knowledge of local-level cultural patterns is seen as a logical precondition of the success of planning. In a related fashion the specific argument is also made that if social movements based on grassroots activism have been influential in the areas of food, health, environment and women then development theory should acknowledge this attending to the business of agency (Preston 1996:296).

The reaction against structural mechanisms that were developed according to the needs of the planners, and the current predisposition towards agent-centred analysis combined with an ongoing commitment for change, brought forth a new interest in the work of NGOs.

It may be argued that the formal theoretical justification for NGO activities within development theory has been located in the concept of the provision of 'basic needs', which are understood to be the basic necessities of human existence (housing, food, medicine, schooling, and welfare) which it was argued might best be provided by development agencies working in close cooperation with the local people through NGOs.

There was a great deal of optimism among the proponents of NGOs. This was derived from a general sense of NGOs 'doing good' and being unencumbered and untainted by the politics of government or the greed of the market (Zivetz 1991). This was frequently reflected in the designations that described these associations in terms of what they are not: non-governmental and non-profit. NGOs are idealised as organisations through which people help others for reasons other than profit or politics (Brown and Korten 1989, Fisher 1993). This idealisation of NGOs as disinterested apolitical participants in a field

of otherwise involved players led theorists and practitioners alike to expect much from them.

### **E. Social Service: Basic Needs and the Role of NGOs**

The main assertion of 'basic needs', when first formulated by the United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the mid 1970's, was a strong commitment to continued growth and development of industry and modern sectors with additional special measures that must be implemented in order to reach and assist the poorest 40 per cent of developing countries' populations.

Though not inclusive, the fundamental concepts of the basic needs approach include attempts to provide opportunities for the full physical, mental and social development of the human personality (Streeten et al., 1982: Ch I). Importantly, three types of needs tend to recur in most of the formulations, and a particular mode of reasoning in favour of basic needs strategies may also be extracted. There is a general consensus that basic needs include; first, the individual human beings' and the families' need for food, shelter, clothes and other necessities of daily life. Secondly, access to public services such as drinking water, sanitation, health and education. Thirdly, access to participate in, and exert influence on, decision making both in the local community and in

national politics. Other debates concerning this approach are not presented, and it is important to note that 'basic needs theory' is not unanimously agreed upon.

Genuine economic development implies not only growth, but also persistent and measurable progress as well as social improvements for the poor and resource-weak groups in a society. This progress and the improvements concern not only incomes, but all aspects of the structure of poverty. In this connection it is emphasised that being poor in a developing country is not just synonymous with inferior purchasing power - there is a whole range of other symptoms associated with poverty, as illustrated in the Figure<sup>3</sup> below:



Figure 1.1

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Martinussen 1997, p. 299.

As the diagram illustrates the poor are generally under- and/or malnourished; they live in substandard housing and have inadequate sanitary and hygienic conditions etc... They are susceptible to disease and their general health is also far worse than that of the rest of the population. In addition, this theory states that usually the poor lack even the most elementary education, and for these reasons they are generally less productive than the rest of the population. They are poorly paid when employed and are unable to exploit the opportunities available through self-employment. They routinely have very little income and, consequently their purchasing power remains highly inadequate. They are in other words 'screwed down' in poverty and conditions where their basic needs are not satisfied. This whole process is repeated continuously and the situation of the poor can thus be characterised as a vicious circle, a poverty circle as illustrated above. Though this theory is an important one, there are many instances where this framework does not apply as concisely as the author contends.

NGOs are purported to be one of the best mechanisms for reaching poor communities as they are viewed as being closer to the ground and hence more aware of the needs of the poorest communities. The following section explores

how NGO access is enhanced by their alleged strength in building communities via their position within civil society.

### 1. Meeting basic needs through communities

A separate group of alternative theories has not only divided the process of development and highlighted its disparate effects on various social groups, but has moved the entire viewpoint and point of convergence towards civil society.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this project I will use Hadenius and Ugglas definition of civil society and will only bring the debate up to 1996 (1996:1621).

A common way of clarifying the concept of civil society is to say that it denotes a) a certain area of society, which is b) dominated by interaction of a certain kind. The area in question is the public space between the state and the individual citizen (or household). Civil society is further distinguished by the fact that the activities contained therein take an organized and collective form. When we speak of civil society, it is to groups arranged in social networks of a reasonably fixed and routinized character that we refer.

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<sup>4</sup> There is an exhaustive literature available on the current and ongoing debate concerning the exact definition of civil society as well as its significance in state-society relations and development. Most present day notions of civil society resemble the conception put forth by Antonio Gramsci. Contrary to previous conceptions of civil society as essentially everything outside the domain of the state, Gramsci introduced in the twentieth century a distinction between the state, the basic economic structures and civil society.

For some scholars and practitioners this has meant a 'romantic rehatching of local communities' as sufficient bases and frameworks for human development. For them, the state is part of the problem and should be avoided and disempowered. They view the empowerment and strengthening of local communities as a means to promote human development and an end in itself (Korten 1990, Kothari 1991).

We have entered a period of great ideological vacuum— with the centralized state having reached its nadir and the alternatives being proposed to it... [the market] having little to commend itself given its even more centralizing and homogenizing implications. The real choice is not between the state and the market but between a socially disembodied state enjoying exclusivist powers and a socially responsive and sensitive framework of power –democratic, decentralist and participant (Kothari 1991: 558, cited in Riker 1998).

Diamond (1992) contends that democracy requires the construction of a vibrant, vigorous and pluralistic civil society. Without such a civil society, 'democracy cannot become developed and secure. A strong civil society...represents a reservoir of resources—political, economic, cultural, and moral—to check and balance the power of the state'. It is believed that NGOs constitute an essential part of this effort to build social pluralism within civil society and encourage state accountability to its peoples. Many contend that

NGOs, as non-state actors, offer one institutional means for gaining greater accountability for the economic, political and social affairs of a country. Moreover, when NGOs are linked with other social and political forces, it has been put forward that NGOs can act as a countervailing actor to both the state and private sectors. Consequently, international donors are increasingly supporting NGOs to promote this accountability process, targeting aid to support not only the more conventional service delivery roles but also importantly policy advocacy.

Through this process donors are forcing governments to open up the political system, as they have the economic system through liberalisation and privatisation, and to strengthen the NGO sector within civil society (Korten 1990:100). Whilst this method is politically sensitive, there are signs that donors are now more willing to press governments for political reforms, especially where donors have the leverage and perceive the longevity of incumbent regimes as not being in their long-term interests.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>For instance, the United States backed World Bank sanctions in September 1991 against Haiti after a military coup; in November 1991, the international donor consortium responsible for providing aid to Kenya gave the Moi government six months to undertake political reforms, allow multi-party democracy, and demonstrate its commitment to human rights or face suspension of aid, and again in 1992, the consortium went against Peru after President Alberto Fujimori suspended the Peruvian constitution and disbanded the national legislature.

Friedmann, though a strong supporter of local community development through NGOs, has criticised these views explaining that they exaggerate the excellence and infallibility of people (1992). He goes further to claim that they naively believe that alternative development can be created and sustained in small local communities and in consistent opposition to the state. His main argument is that although alternative development must begin locally, it cannot and should not end there. He argues that without the collaboration of the state, the lot of the poor cannot be significantly improved (ibid.). Moreover, Friedmann<sup>6</sup> has set himself apart from this category of alternative theories, because they assume conflict-free and homogenous human communities, whereas the reality is very often quite different, and a plethora of inequalities exist as well as ongoing conflicts of interest. Friedmann (1992) among others are trying to alter the agenda and shift primary attention to the horizontal axis passing through civil society and the political community.

As briefly stated above, international donor agencies have sought to exert pressures on some governments in the developing world to undertake both economic and political reforms. Some analysts contend that the donors' shift to

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<sup>6</sup>The theories of Friedmann and Polany converge in that their basic contention is that economic

supporting INGOs/NGOs is by and large not due to the latter's potential political role in strengthening civil society or democratic processes, but rather due to INGOs/NGOs perceived management capabilities in providing services in a more cost-efficient and effective manner than governments in the developing world. Kothari (1991:6) argues that the prevailing ideology of privatisation embraced by international donors and governments alike favours INGOs/NGOs in as much as: 'The preference for voluntary organizations as against government departments for carrying out development is only an extension of the preference for the private sector' (cited in Riker 1998). This understanding also seems to be the prevalent practice at the World Bank, which views INGOs/NGOs as located in the public-private sector (Malena 1995). The following section looks at this conjecture in some detail, and shows that the concept of 'comparative advantage' is indeed an important factor in the INGO/NGO equation.

#### **F. Economic Value: NGOs and the new development agenda**

In recent years, significantly since the end of the Cold War in 1989, bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies have pursued a 'new development agenda' which gives special significance to the roles of NGOs and GROs in poverty alleviation,

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relations and economic activity are deeply embedded in the matrix of social and cultural relations.

social welfare, and the development of a 'civil society' (Robinson 1993; Fowler 2000). NGOs have historically, especially through Christian missionary activities, provided services in health and education, particularly in Africa and Asia where governments lacked the resources for comprehensive coverage, which was 'service by default rather than design' (Edwards and Hulme 1996: 961). However, today, NGOs are typically preferred over governments as providers for social welfare- and this is a crucial change in policy.

Donors are divided on what the exact definition of what the new development agenda constitutes. However, in every case, two concepts are clear. The first is economic: markets and private sector initiative are understood to be the most efficient mechanisms for achieving economic growth, producing goods, and providing services. Though this may be an imperfect mechanism it is argued that 'imperfect markets are better than imperfect states' (Colclough and Manor 1991: 7). NGOs are seen to be cost-effective providers of services for the poor and to be more effective than states in providing value for money. (Meyer 1992; Sollis 1992; Vivian 1994). Additionally, NGOs are viewed as an obvious extension of the move towards liberalisation and privatisation.

There is an influential belief among donors that NGOs have a comparative advantage in the field of development. Advocates of NGOs maintain that these organisations give 'value for money' in service provision, have a greater poverty reach (meaning they are able to reach the poorest of the poor), that they encourage popular participation, and that they are flexible and innovative. This is opposed to developing states, which are viewed as gender-biased, inefficient, top down, corrupt and excessively bureaucratic.

The best known proponents of NGOs and comparative advantage are Brown and Korten 1989, and Clark 1992. These writers generally organise their theories of NGO 'comparative advantage' in the context of the 'crises' of development thinking. NGOs are prescribed for development ills because their organisational characteristics are claimed to be participatory, innovative, less bureaucratic, flexible, cheap and able to benefit the poorest of the poor (Fowler, 1992a; 1992b)<sup>7</sup>. Comparative advantage is a term borrowed from economics discourse which in the context of NGOs broadly indicates that NGOs are better at doing 'it' (development) than other organisations, for example 'commercial enterprise and government' (Fowler and James 1995:15). However, unlike its

economic counterpart, 'the notion of NGO comparative advantage is vague in the extreme, and impossible to measure' (Stewart 1997:12).

Significantly, many NGOs have taken the decision to scale-up their programmes and services, citing the need for ever-increasing demands for service provision and poverty alleviation. They justify scaling-up by claiming that small organisations cannot meet the challenges of immense underdevelopment, therefore it has become necessary to expand services, operations and influence through lobbying, whilst maintaining the assets of small organisation (Howes and Sattar 1992). Research suggests that as NGOs increase in size, they experience all of the difficulties associated with large organisations, for example an unwieldy bureaucracy and inflexibility (Brown and Covey 1987: 21). Importantly, as NGOs grow larger, their need for funding increases and this 'creates organizational schizophrenia,' with part of the staff working on fundraising and another part, usually field staff, working with target groups (Stewart 1997: 14; Brown and Covey 1987: 21). Stewart (ibid.) correctly points out that:

... smallness is either an advantage or it is not and it seems odd to suggest in one breath that smallness is a Good Thing, and in the next that NGOs should get bigger.

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<sup>7</sup> Alan Fowler has revised his view of NGO performance based on the incompatibility of their work within an unbalanced and coercive aid system; (see Fowler 2000).

She goes on to argue that there is a fundamental problem with the notion of comparative advantage and therefore with the idea that NGOs can have an extensive developmental impact. The elements which combine to create comparative advantage are organisational traits typical of small organisations, whilst development problems are immense. Problems of this size require either massive logistically sophisticated organisations or incredibly well co-ordinated groups of smaller organisations (ibid.).

Economic concepts such as comparative advantage are not the only benefits NGOs are claimed to have in the development process. Many donors have come to the conclusion that 'good governance' is the sine qua non for sustainable development and have shifted their resources to focus not only on state institutions but also to support the development of democratic institutions within civil society (World Bank 1992). The following section looks at the implications of this concept and its place in the overall international development apparatus.

### **G. Political Organisation and NGOs**

The second concept of the new development agenda is political: 'good governance' is seen as essential for a healthy economy, even though the

evidence underlying this claim is mixed (Moore 1993; Healey and Robinson 1992). NGOs and GROs are awarded a key role in the democratisation process by bilateral and multilateral agencies, as witnessed in recent policy statements from the World Bank (1994) and the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA 1993-now DFID) among others. They are seen as an essential counterweight to state power, opening up channels of communication and participation, providing training grounds for activists, and promoting pluralism. This role has been documented particularly clearly in Latin America (Loveman 1991; Lehman 1990) and is supported by many NGOs and NGO analysts themselves, though disconnected from the priorities of the donors (Korten 1990; Clark 1991).

The NGO sector was increasingly being seen as an important actor in improving economic and social welfare of people, advocating for social and political justice, protecting the environment and in 'promoting progressive forms of governance' and democratisation. (Bratton 1990:104; Berg 1987; Durning 1989; Downs et al. 1989; Shaw 1990; Breslin 1991; Clark 1991).

In fact a number of observers in the developing world believe that it is essential to link grassroots development and ongoing democratic processes from

below (Sheth 1983; Sethi 1984; Arruda 1985; R. Kothari 1986; Diaz-Albertini 1990; Wignararaja 1993; S. Kothari 1996). Advocates of this notion supported NGOs because it is believed that they contribute to democratising processes. The literature on NGOs relies on several key terms: participation, empowerment, local, and community.

Information on NGOs is replete with examples of a growing involvement of GROs in representation and lobbying; and by NGOs in mediation, advocacy, training and 'civic education' (Fowler 1991). Of course, these roles are far more pronounced in states where there are spaces for action and democratic systems in places, such as India, where pressure from NGOs and GROs can achieve meaningful 'micro policy reform' (Korten 1990; Edwards and Hulme 1992). Importantly, when organisations can join together to form alliances, they have the ability to influence formal political processes, as in the Philippines (the fall of President Marcos) and Mexico (participation in Presidential election). (CONVERGENCIA 1993; Constantino-David 1992).

Although NGOs have shown themselves able to influence the democratic process, some commentators remain doubtful about the prospects for NGO or GROs involvement in the political process. Lehmann (1990:pp.xiv and 205),

writing on Latin America, shows that it is the leaders of social movements who have an interest in formal politics not their members. Even though Latin American social movements are vital to the survival of the poor, they have made little impact on the formal political process and should 'leave political parties to get on with the real business of ideological struggle', while being proud of their record in rendering 'liberal democratic movements more sustainable and helping to cement human and political rights in society'. Fowler (1991, 1993) reaches the same conclusion in his writing on Africa. He concludes that NGOs are unlikely to have a significant impact on political reform, largely because African governments have become skilled at containing such a possibility through regulation and fragmentation of the NGO movement,' and partly because NGOs themselves have failed to develop effective strategies to promote democratisation, especially what Fowler (1993:328) calls 'citizenship...the organic link between the state and the citizens that is missing in much of Africa'.

Inherent in giving NGOs a crucial role to play in advancing democracy and pluralism is a conception of a dichotomous relationship between state and civil society. For Tvedt there is a perceived zero-sum game between NGOs and the

state - a competitive relationship in which one actor's gain is the other's loss (Tvedt 1998:34).

Such relational variables about political nearness to or distance from governments neglect historical and cultural differences in these relations from society to society and from time to time (what is regarded as anti-government in some countries may be seen as pro-establishment in other countries and vice versa), and it also downplays the different role and importance of physical distance between the NGO and the 'centre' in different countries. The enormous differences in character of state formations and the size and character of the 'third sector' and the role of 'voluntary organizations' - if it is at all possible to talk about the third sector and voluntary organizations in many countries (ibid.).

Furthermore, the principle of state sovereignty is contentious, and is argued by some scholars in the case of Lebanon to be an artificial construction. Many developing states, including Lebanon, still struggle to justify their supremacy over other institutions—especially ethnic groups and religious societies.

In recent years a dominant perspective in much research on NGO-government relationships has focused on the contrasts between the political role and characteristics of states and those of NGOs. This theory assumes that NGOs are conceived of as instruments for organising local initiatives and

promoting local participation and diversity as opposed to the state, whose approach is seen as dirigiste and top-down, and expressing the interests of a bureaucratised, alienated elite in search of illegitimate control. Irrespective of time and place, the emergence of NGOs has been analysed as an organisational expression of particular interests or objectives within the body politic, which are not adequately represented within the political system. They are therefore seen as implicitly expressing democratic interests on behalf of civil society. (Tvedt op.cit.: 207). Importantly, a consistent criticism of NGOs and GROs in the literature is their failure to develop participatory mechanisms for internal debate and decision making, despite their stated values and principles (Bebbington and Thiele 1993; Wellard and Copestake 1993). In many cases, the disappointment with the inability of NGOs and GROs to promote democratisation 'reflect[s] the paradox of organizations promoting democratization which are themselves only weakly democratic' (Edwards and Hulme 1996:965).

Funding from Northern governments for NGO projects/programmes complicates the picture considerably. Bebbington and Thiele (1993:182) describe the politicisation of NGOs in Central America during the 1980's when the US Agency for International Development (USAID) funded a range of right-wing

groups, and Northern NGOs funded a range of left-wing groups. Edwards and Hulme (1996) ask the question; 'Is this strengthening civil society or is it merely an attempt to shape civil society in ways that external actors believe is desirable'? Will this promote endogenous and sustainable forms of democracy or call forth a backlash of authoritarianism against 'foreign interference'? (Brautigam 1992 as cited in Edwards and Hulme 1996). What role can opportunistic NGOs with no mission other than the winning of donor or government contracts play in democratisation (Bebbington and Thiele 1993:3)? This is of particular concern where new NGOs are being formed very rapidly on the back of readily available official funding.

### 1. Sub-contracting

David Korten (1990) coined the term public service contractors (PSCs) to indicate those NGOs or INGOs geared more to serving as non-profit market-oriented businesses working for public purposes. He argues that these organisations sell their services to aid donors and governments in order to implement their projects and programmes. They are different from voluntary organisations in that they are motivated more by market considerations than by values, and have much more in common with private businesses. According to

Brown and Korten (1991: 62): the conceptual difference between a voluntary organisation and a PSC is clear: 'A value-driven NGO defines its program based on its social mission, and then seeks the funding required to implement it. The market driven PSC starts with an assessment of prospective funding sources and defines its program on that basis.' The authors admit that it is hard to make a clear distinction between the two types of organisations. Korten admits that many PSCs are in fact hybrids, combining a strong market orientation with a clear social commitment and high ethical standards, and that such hybrids are likely to be an important trend in the future.

Korten asserts that donors search for NGOs to implement projects that have technical competence, well-developed management systems and a concern with cost-efficiency. Increasingly, he argues that there are pressures on voluntary organisations to turn into PSCs. The reasons include: uncertain and inconstant financing, and the availability of donor money; the inability to maintain a challenging atmosphere against deeply embedded norms and practices; the difficulty in maintaining a consensus based on value as the INGO grows; the responsibility to provide job security to paid staff; the belief that resources

received from contracting can be used for high priority work; and increased pressure from donors to professionalise the staff (Korten 1990:103).

Robinson argues that there is more than just funding difficulties, organisational growth and staff professionalism at question, 'there are also broader structural and ideological determinants at work which reflect economic realities and neo-liberal influences' (Robinson 1997:61). Due to the adjustment measures in the 1980's, sharp reductions in public expenditure led to the expanded role for INGO's delivery of social goods; health, education, rural development and others. This was actively encouraged by donors, who participated in the form of grants, but 'increasingly by means of contracts'. (Robinson *ibid.*). For NGOs maintaining their idealised role as advocate for the poor and the underprivileged along with their role as fast, cost-efficient mechanisms for development is becoming increasingly incongruent.

Many of the INGOs in my study were in fact PSCs and not value driven organisations. They definitely tailored their projects according to the available funds and agenda(s) of the donor, instead of having a clear mission and attempting to locate funds in order to implement that mission.

The USAID agenda relies heavily on short-term solutions to poverty that consist mostly of infrastructure projects and not on long-term poverty alleviation strategies aimed at finding a solution to the grinding destitution that many men and women live in. My conclusion concurs with Sara Roy's from her work in the Gaza Strip. We both argue that USAID's work emphasises immediate, visible and quantitative results over long-term, sustainable, qualitative solutions to poverty. In the end of the day, they (USAID) are developing projects not people.

The main problem of the USAID program is its lack of emphasis on developing human resources, the areas primary if not sole asset. In my view, this is a critical and dangerous failing. In USAID's new, longer-term strategy, there is little if any attention paid to educational reform, mental health rehabilitation, health reform generally and the long-term alleviation of poverty. The emphasis remains on infrastructure, not on people, on employment generation through reconstruction and renovation. While immediate results are important, and it clearly helps the peace process to have tangible, visible improvements such as better sewage systems, these are not as important as sustained employment, adequate food, and access to quality education and health services (Roy 1996 :25).

Finally, INGOs that depend on official funding often perform poorly in the crucial task of local institutional development (Esman and Uphoff 1984), the gradual strengthening of capacities and capabilities among GROs to enable them to play a more effective and independent role in development. This is so because many

official agencies are unwilling to support the long time horizons, careful nurturing, and gradual qualitative results that characterise successful institutional development (Carroll 1992; Fowler 1992). Such work is difficult to sell to politicians and their constituents back in Europe or North America, on whom aid bureaucracies depend for their budgets (LaFond 1995).

### **H. International Donor Driven Development**

The prominence awarded to NGOs, INGOs and GROs as implementers of the New Policy Agenda, as stated above, has led official agencies to channel increasing amounts of money to and through them. Although the data vary considerably from country to country, two trends are visible. First, the proportion of total bilateral aid channelled through INGOs is increasing. The proportion of total aid from member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) channelled through INGOs rose from 0.7% in 1975 to 3.6% in 1985, and at least 5% in 1993-1994, some US\$2.3 billion in absolute terms (OECD 1988; 1994; 1995). For some bilateral donors the figure is much higher, for example, 30% of total Swedish aid was channelled through NGOs in 1994 (OECD 1995). INGOs have, in fact, become much larger players in the delivery of official development assistance than is generally appreciated;

receiving as much as 29% from Switzerland, 25% from Norway, and 14% from the Netherlands of official aid budgets (ODA Briefing Note 1995, as cited in Smillie 1997). Nearly 28% of US Agency International Development (USAID) spending was channelled through northern and southern NGOs combined (Sholes and Covey 1996). Second, and perhaps more significantly, individual NGOs are becoming increasingly dependent on official aid, especially recently as there has been a perceivable decrease of voluntary income from the public in many Northern countries. For example, the five largest development INGOs in the United Kingdom all show a significantly rising trend, with levels of dependence on government grants oscillating between 18% and 52% in 1994, up from between 7% and 15% ten years earlier. Levels of dependency are much higher in continental Europe and North America; for example, it is common to find government grants making up between 50% and 90% of the budgets of major INGOs in Scandinavia, the United States, the Netherlands and Canada, most of which is eventually passed on to NGOs in the South.

Increased support for NGOs during the late 1970's and throughout the 1980s greatly increased this sector's visibility as well as increased demands for its broader participation in the development process. Moreover, NGOs have

gained official recognition and greater legitimacy as spokespersons at the international level.<sup>8</sup> One analyst posits that with respect specifically to Africa, if donors seek to have a greater impact on political development, then Fowler (1991) concluded that 'strengthening civil society must therefore be a deliberately designed and targeted activity of aid' advocating that:

Financing NGOs in Africa as potential agents of democracy should be at the top of donor agendas in the 1990s because the degree of inequity, injustice and deprivation on the continent does not allow us simply to expect that development in the economic realm will spin-off into democratization. This outcome must be consciously sought (Fowler 1991: 78).

One justification for advocating expansion and strengthening of NGOs advocacy role is that this sector could possibly serve as a countervailing force to the dominance of the state or the market.<sup>9</sup>

A focus on the channel as an international donor-driven system also enables a more realistic analysis of the theory of a global associational revolution, and the processes and distribution of power within it. This approach

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<sup>8</sup>Uphoff notes that, 'One of the most interesting trends in less-developed countries is the increasing institutionalization of NGOs as a category... That the World Bank and other United Nations bodies have granted NGOs observer status and other special recognition has enhanced their ability to affect policy pronouncements and resource allocations over and above their respective abilities to exercise power or influence.' (1993:616)

pays attention to the role of donor money and donor policies in shaping organisational landscapes in other countries, the dilemma between organisations' external dependency and their roots in society and the fact that aid NGOs from donor countries do not necessarily reflect the national traditions in those same countries (Tvedt.:4-5).

NGO growth and official funding of NGOs are not new phenomena, but the trends outlined above do give rise to important questions concerning NGO performance and accountability, NGO-state relations, and the ability of NGOs to act independently in pursuing their goals. Specifically, Edwards and Hulme (1996: 962) put forth four hypotheses surrounding the effect of official funding on NGO performance:

- encourages NGOs to become providers of social and economic services on a much larger scale than hitherto, even though their long-term comparative advantage in this field is doubtful.
- compromises the performance of NGOs and GROs in other areas of development activity such as institutional development and advocacy.
- weakens the legitimacy of NGOs and GROs as independent actors in society.
- distorts the accountability of NGOs and GROs away from grassroots and internal constituencies and over emphasises short-term, quantitative outputs.

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<sup>9</sup>This point was made by Alexis de Tocqueville based on his observations of voluntary associations in America in the 1830s. (cf. de Tocqueville 1945).

It follows in their analysis that if the above hypotheses are valid then: 'this must cast doubt on the ability of NGOs and GROs to be effective vehicles for the delivery of the New Policy Agenda and its long-term aim of sustainable poverty alleviation' (ibid.: 963).

It is believed among donors that NGOs or GROs give more 'value for money' and this explains to some extent why official bodies have increased funds for NGOs, especially in the health and education sectors, credit schemes, and small-scale infrastructure projects. These funds sometimes fall under the classification of 'Investment Funds' or 'Social Funds' intended to moderate the social and economic effects of economic and structural adjustment packages (Voorhies 1993; Arellano-Lopez and Petras 1994).

Almost all service-delivery NGOs operate on large funds that come from external donors, resources that are increasingly denied to governments. Edwards and Hulme (1996: 964) point out that:

Were ministries of health and education allowed access to resources on this scale, it is argued, then over time they too would be able to provide services as cost-effectively. Indeed, the widening gap between government and NGO resources makes state inefficiency a 'self-perpetuating reality' (Farrington and Lewis 1993: 333).

Moreover, it is important to note that this phenomenal increase in the number, size and financial status of NGOs in the 1980s and the 1990s has to a large extent happened without close inspection of their actual performance. Questions concerning service provision, including poverty reach, cost effectiveness, popular participation, flexibility and innovation, and democratisation exist and need to be researched. Other questions concerning the measurement of performance, including legitimacy, accountability and sustainability also remain open and require satisfactory documentation from sources other than NGO personnel. Most of the literature and studies regarding NGO performance are anecdotal, produced within the NGO community, and based on small, selective samples (Edwards and Hulme 1996: 963).

Critics of NGOs have pointed to a lack of accountability, mutual competitiveness and poor co-ordination as perhaps the three most serious charges levelled at NGOs working in development. Concern has also been expressed about the fact that some NGOs have crowded out governments by offering better services and salaries and, in some cases, have made little secret of their wish to replace government structures. Another severe criticism is that INGOs have almost completely failed to transfer skills to their Southern

counterparts. Bennett (1995:xiv), among many others, argues that there is a need for increased NGO transparency.

For all their laudable success, some NGOs have been guilty of poor practice, wastage and a lack of professionalism, which to a large extent has gone unchecked. They tend to throw a veil of secrecy over actions that would not stand up to public scrutiny and rarely are NGO programmes evaluated from the standpoint of a broader analysis of their political as well as humanitarian impact.

In summary, donors have found significant political and operational flexibility in NGOs at a time when total aid budgets are declining. Duffield (1994) pinpoints the resulting dilemma:

Tragically, as Bosnia has shown, donor flexibility has contributed to the erosion of ideas of collective international responsibility for the Southern predicament. The UN Charter and Geneva Conventions have been weakened... In their place narrow perceptions of national interest, or calculations based on media exposure or domestic political advantage, have become the arbiters of engagement... [This flexibility] has been helped by the emergence of a private and competitive NGO sector... NGO financial and media dependency, plus their ability to work in a variety of situations, has been important in allowing donor governments to shape humanitarian programmes around national interests - a major charge that many NGOs appear unable to contemplate, let alone accept.

Increasingly, NGOs are being sucked into a foreign policy vacuum with which they are ill equipped to deal. The use of humanitarian or development aid as a

tool to encourage stability in politically volatile situations has disturbing consequences (see for example, Fennell 1994).

## **I. Chapter Summary**

This chapter explored the evolution of development theory and practices, as well as the growing involvement of NGOs in the development process up to 1996. At this time NGOs were increasingly being called upon to fill the void of the 'incapable' state, repair infrastructure and societies, and build democratic institutions. The New Policy Agenda located NGOs front and centre in the bid to develop communities through allegedly providing basic needs, economic alternatives and skills in participating in the political processes of their local communities and state.

The importance of this chapter for my thesis is to provide a backdrop for looking at the specific, selected work of seven INGOs within the context of a particular country. As was stated in this chapter, the impact of INGOs must be analysed as concretely as possible. Their role within the political economy of a state depends mostly on the specific character of the state system they are working in. In this case, we will be looking at Lebanon; a state that has been slowly recovering its influence and jurisdiction following 17 years of civil war.

The next chapter will look at the political economy of Lebanon—both in a historical and current perspective. Additionally, the chapter will locate the birth, growth and change of INGOs within the context of the country's political economy. The chapter will also include a section specifically on rural areas and agricultural development. It will conclude with remarks concerning INGOs as part of civil society at the time of the fieldwork.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LEBANON: 'A HOUSE OF MANY MANSIONS'

There is a growing sense of distrust and a feeling of powerlessness. I am seeing history repeating itself—nothing has changed in Lebanon.

Lebanese INGO field worker; July 1998

This chapter will attempt to outline the basic historical, cultural, socio-economic and political constituents of the country under study: Lebanon. This is done in order to provide the reader with a general understanding of the particular landscape within which the INGOs studied in this research project were working.

This chapter will also briefly trace the history and development of NGO/INGOs in Lebanon, and will look at their unique position in the political and socio-economic fabric of the country as it attempts to recover from more than 16 years of devastating warfare. Additionally, due to the fact that the INGOs looked at were working in rural areas, the end of the chapter includes an overview of the agricultural situation in the country.

Lebanon is the smallest of the Near Eastern countries, and lies at the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It measures just 210 kilometres from north to south, and ranges between 30 and 90 kilometres in width. The most

populous city is the capital, Beirut, followed by Tripoli (Trablous) to the north and Sidon (Saida) to the south. Lebanon has a very mild climate and breathtaking natural beauty. The country's topography is marked by a rugged mountain range that stretches from the north with mountains that reach a height of 3000 metres above sea level, to the hills of Galilee in the south, and a coastal plain that is divided into several isolated sections by gorges, which are cut by streams that pour down the mountains in winter and spring. Unlike other countries in the region, Lebanon's water resources are plentiful, and rainfall during winter months is sufficient for terraced farming in the mountains.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Map adapted from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/900/910/912/maps/lebanon.gif>



Base 505043 (544600) 2-82

Lebanon is a multi-communal state made up of many ethnic and religious groups. Habib Kourani (1949) called this country a refuge for heretics, non-conformists, the oppressed and discontented. Pierre Rondot (1947: 5), one of the most perceptive writers on Lebanon, noted how the country's topography has contributed to its history and social development.

A rugged country difficult of access, Lebanon has given refuge to dissidents of all sorts. The isolation of its peaks and valleys has enabled tribes and religious groups to survive with their character intact. But the small size of the territory and the need to defend it has compelled these varied groups to practise solidarity and cooperation...The opening to the sea has invited frequent foreign intervention, both for better and for worse. On account of its proximity, the Occident has had a strong influence,...encouraged the development of education and emergence of new ideas. Notwithstanding this, tradition has a strong hold on this country. It remains essentially an alliance of families.

Philip Hitti remarked that this 'mosaic' society in which 'self contained nationalistic or semi-nationalistic communities' are able to co-habit has much to do with the fact that 'the Lebanon especially through its valleys and hills, tends to divide its inhabitants' (Hitti 1957: 7). When Rondot and Hitti wrote these passages, more than 50 per cent of the Lebanese population were working in agriculture and living in rural or semi-rural areas. Today this number has dropped considerably to less than 20 per cent. Massive urbanisation, especially in the

years just preceding the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), has made Beirut one of the most densely populated cities in the Middle East.

### **A. The Lebanese Culture**

Successive upheavals, including foreign conquests and internal conflicts in this limited area have forced some groups to migrate and others to collectively change their religion in order to remain, and have also provided an environment where one can observe corresponding features which form a distinct cultural identity of the Lebanese Mountain and its surrounding areas. Lebanon's unique culture has greatly influenced the overall political and socio-economic history of the country, and it is essential to appreciate before attempting to analyse the overall Lebanese political economy.

#### **1. Primary solidarities**

If there has ever been a culture with an exclusive kinship orientation, Lebanon comes close to being such. Kinship has been, and is likely to remain, Lebanon's most solid and enduring social bond (Khalaf 1987: 164).

Firstly, the importance of family unity is historically intertwined with the organisation of peasant farmers, the distribution of agricultural land, and the type

of agrarian exploitation, both when there was a greater distribution of small properties (up to the eighteenth century) and later, when the growing indebtedness of the peasant farmers opened the way for the amassing of private land by the tax-collecting notables. Peasant labour and economic units of production were based on the kinship system and greatly influenced Mount Lebanon's fiscal and administrative structure. For centuries, from the Ottoman conquests (1516) to the mid 1800s, the Mountain and outlying areas were organised around a category of notables who collected lump-sum taxes for the authorities, as in neighbouring Syria and Palestine, with the exception that in Lebanon these tax collecting families were considered hierarchically superior to other families. Significantly, prestige and political power (independent of economic power) were maintained and passed through the channel of familial lineage from generation to generation.<sup>2</sup>

The Lebanese culture forms a pattern of solidarity, which begins with the family (nuclear and extended), expands to the sect or religion<sup>3</sup>, then the village,

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<sup>2</sup> These are extended family relationships, rather like tribal clans with several branches. Being born in the same area of the village, having the same patronymic, or ties forged through endogamous marriage are also included within these extended family relationships.

<sup>3</sup> Muslim sects will align with each other when faced with a Christian challenge (e.g. In February 1984 Shi'ite, Druze, and Sunni factions allied together against the Lebanese Army and the Lebanese Forces (a Christian militia) in a maelstrom of violence to take control of West Beirut).

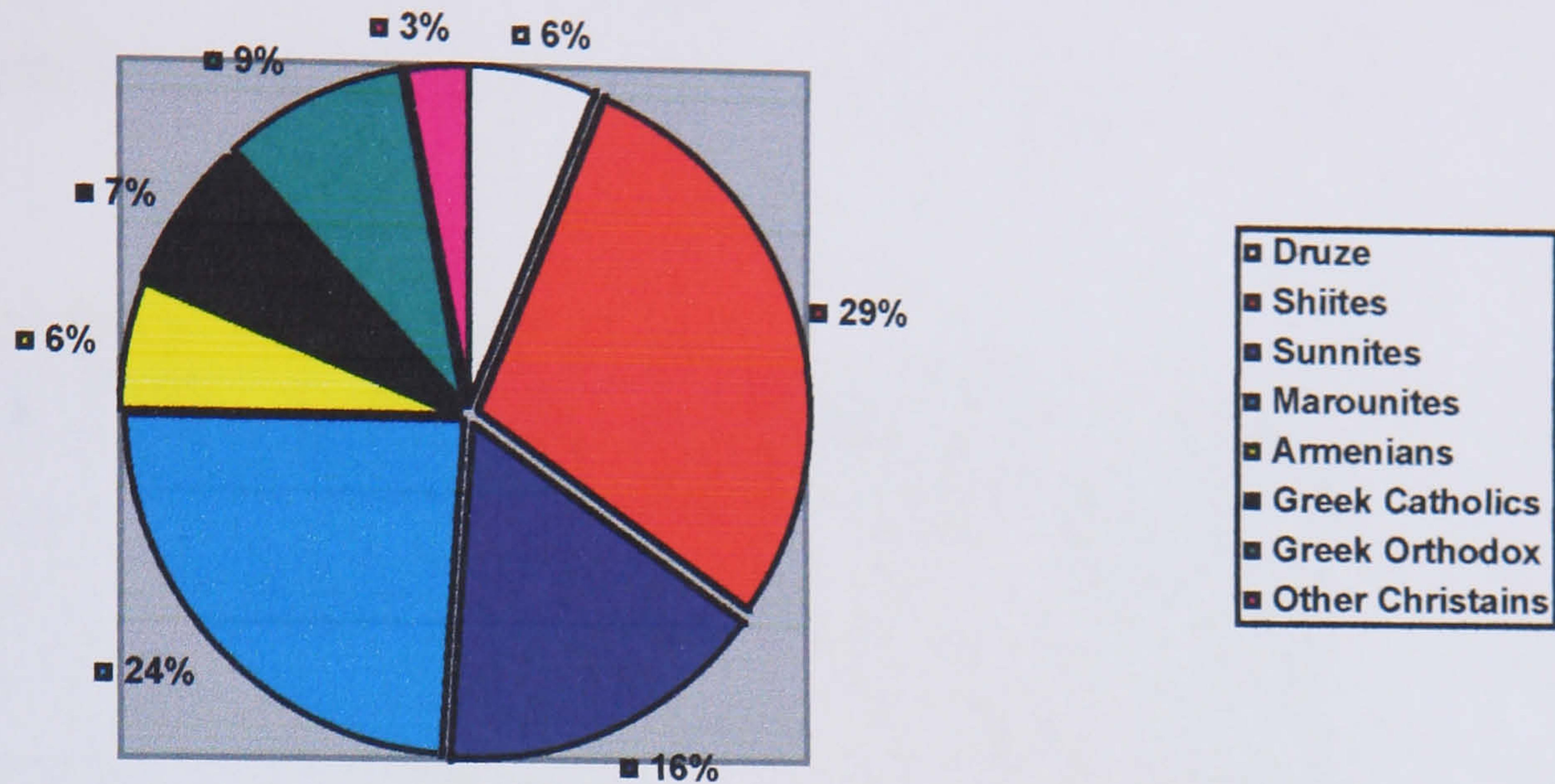
and finally to the region of the country. For example, a Druze from Baakline will typically first identify with his/her family, the Druze sect, then with various groupings within the sect (the Jumblatt or the Arslan clan), the village of Baakline, and lastly the region of the country (the Shuf).

The population of Lebanon is estimated at approximately four million, with over 1,600,000 persons living in Beirut, and 600,000 in Tripoli. Lebanon's 18 different communities include; Sunni Muslims, Shi'ite Muslims, Druzes, Maronite Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Gregorians, Catholics and Protestants; various other Christian groups include Roman Catholics, Protestants, Syriac-speaking Christian communities (Jacobites, Syrian Catholics, Nestorians and Caldeans), a dwindling Jewish community, and the recently added Alawite sect. An official census has not been taken since 1932 and is opposed by nearly all of the communities because of a fear of upsetting the 'balance' and hence a possible loss of power.

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However, in most cases this solidarity of religion breaks down when the challenge recedes (e.g. The coalition mentioned above disintegrated into fratricidal war after gaining control of West Beirut). The same notion applies to Christian sects. Historically, there have been some exceptions to this rule, but they remain scarce.

Figure 2.2



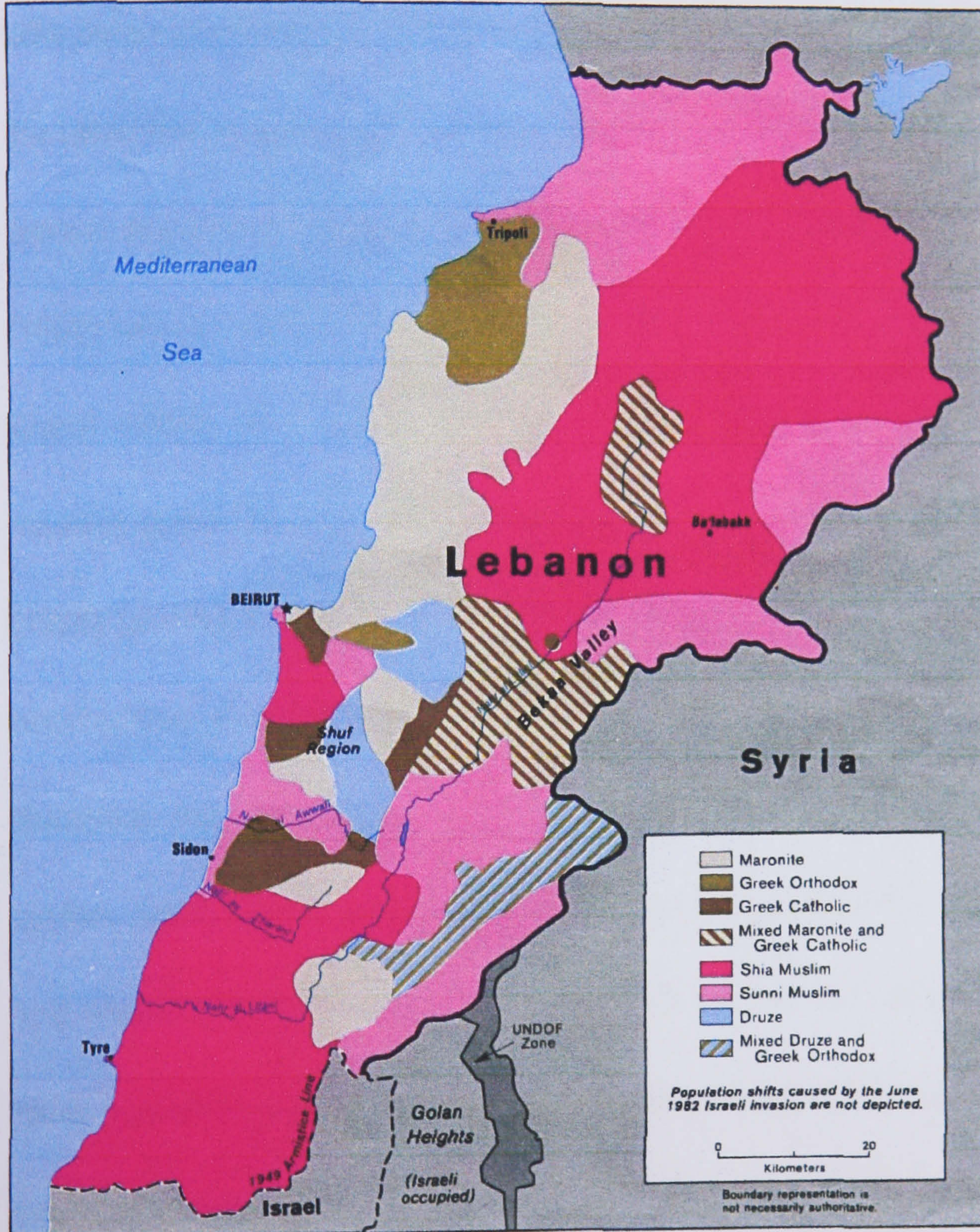
Religious communities Hartmann's estimates, 1973  
(resident citizens only)

What is known about Lebanon's sects is that none of the communities constitute a majority. Somehow the absence of actual figures provides a dubious sense of comfort for many Lebanese as legends of persecution still circulate, and the various communities that populate Lebanon continue to live in fear of subjugation and expulsion.

Called the 'Switzerland of the Middle East', Lebanon in the 1960's and early 70s attracted the rich and famous, was a regional business centre, and a safe haven for outspoken Arab intelligentsia. Today, the term *Lebanization* has been coined as a pejorative to describe the utter collapse of a state under

pressure from various groups whose armed competition for power and resources ultimately results in the destruction of a society and its infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

### Distribution of Religious Groups



<sup>4</sup> Map from:  
[www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map\\_collection/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/Lebanon\\_Religions\\_83.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/middle_east_and_asia/Lebanon_Religions_83.jpg)

Presently the Lebanese are coming to terms with the causes and consequences of the most recent civil war (1975-1990). The abrupt end of the fighting came with the beginning of the 1991 Gulf War and the initiation of peace talks between Israel and the Arabs, but most importantly, the war ended because the Lebanese people had exhausted themselves. The literature on the subject of pre-war and wartime Lebanon is abundant. Studies by Binder (1966) and Hudson (1968) look at Lebanon's prospects for coexistence in better days. Khuri (1975); Khalaf (1987), and Dubar and Nasr (1976) examine aspects of Lebanon's massive social transformation in the pre-war years. Beydoun (1984) and Salibi (1988) provide a historic analysis of the growing self-awareness of the various communities and their eventual mobilisation. Barakat (1977) and Messara (1977) illuminate the adaptability and reformability of the Lebanese socio-political system. Salibi (1976) provides an account of the immediate prelude to civil war, and Khalidi (1979); Rabinovich (1985); Fisk (1990) and Picard (1988), (1996) have published precise and balanced studies of the war in Lebanon. For post-war reconstruction and its problems see Hanf (1993); Collings (1994) and Kiwan (1994). There is no complete synthesis on the contemporary economy of Lebanon, however Gates (1998) and Owen (1976) are very complete accounts of

the pre-war Lebanese economy and its effects on the political establishment and society. Additionally, Saidi (1999) has published a collection of essays covering the economics of the reconstruction period and Najem (2000) has published a comprehensive account of the political economy of the reconstruction of the country following the civil war.

Before looking at Lebanon's current state of affairs, a brief summary of its history will aid in understanding the country's recent experience. At this point, it is important to point out that discussing Lebanon's origins is not straightforward as there is considerable internal disagreement concerning the history of the Republic. Whilst it is true that written history is rarely neutral, it is of great importance that a newly independent state takes an equitable stand on its origins and ensures that this information is disseminated among its population. Without this basic building block, all attempts at state-construction will almost certainly come tumbling down. Consecutive Lebanese leaders have failed to understand this basic premise and have chosen to ignore building long-term foundations for coexistence in favour of constructing personal kingdoms based on temporary alliances and permanent divisions.

The next three main sections of this work examine the political, economic and social history of Lebanon, and follow with a section on its agriculture and rural political economy. References to the social, political and economic significance of NGOs/INGOs will be made throughout this chapter in order to illustrate their evolution and importance during the Mandate period, Independence, Civil War and the Second Lebanese Republic.

### **B. Historical Background: The Ottoman Period**

Before the creation of a distinct Lebanese state in 1920, Lebanon was considered to be the mountain range only and was called "The Lebanon". For more than 300 years it fell under the administration of the Ottoman Empire. A governor, or one of their adjutants, who resided in Damascus, Sidon, Tripoli and eventually Beirut, ruled the area of Mount Lebanon. The coastal cities were more or less under direct jurisdiction, but the mountain region or Mount Lebanon, like many other mountain districts in the Empire, whilst paying formal recognition to the Sultan in Istanbul, enjoyed relative autonomy from Ottoman government administration. Though the mountain inhabitants (Druzes, Maronites and Shi'ites) enjoyed great freedom in running their own affairs, they could not default on their obligation to pay taxes and tribute to the central authority of the Sunni Islamic

Empire. In fact, several punitive campaigns were launched against the mountain communities whenever the authorities felt that the inhabitants of the 'autonomous' region were getting out of control or when tax payments were in arrears.

The minority non-Muslim peoples of the area were classified according to their religion and were organised into a religious grouping called a 'millet', which was based on the ancient Muslim system of 'wardship'. The millets were granted some autonomy in the administration of the personal status affairs of their followers, which was the continuation of a long-standing Islamo-Arabic practice and remains a practice to this day.<sup>5</sup>

These two factors, autonomy in political and social spheres contributed to the various religious communities aligning themselves with foreign sponsors or protectors, a practice that has proved to be both salutary and pernicious. The Maronites' historical relationship with the West, especially the French, became solidified; the Greek Orthodox sought help from Russia and the Druze received support from Great Britain.

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<sup>5</sup> All laws concerning personal status are left to the religious communities. For instance civil marriage is forbidden, and inheritance, marriage, divorce, custody of children, adoption etc... all must conform to the rites and regulations of the individual's religious sect.

Maronites, Druzes, Shi'ites and other Christians shared the mountain, but it was presided over by Druze and Maronite 'feudal lords', who were considered to be Princes by the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon and surrounding areas. The 'feudal' system originally introduced by the Egyptian Mamluk sultans was adapted to something like the Ottoman administrative system. The new Ottoman rulers maintained the system, though they instigated some changes in the fief holders and promoted certain families over others. According to Philip Hitti (1965:358):

As a rule the Lebanese vassals acted independently on the domestic level, transmitted their holdings to their descendants, offered no military service to the Sultan, exacted taxes and duties as they pleased, and even exercised the right of life and death over their subjects, and at least one of them concluded a treaty with a foreign power.

The term feudal, however, is somewhat misleading if used as an analogy to medieval Europe. The system in the Lebanon was not based on the ownership of land, but on the right to collect taxes. The tax-farmers were from leading Druze and later Sunni and Maronite families, and control of these offices typically remained within the respective families. Characteristically, these princely families would rely on prominent local families to collect the taxes at the local level. From

this 'a stratum of notables gradually developed' (Hanf 1993:54). These powerful tax-farming and tax-collecting families would in turn use their income to purchase land, and then lease it for cash or for a share of the harvest. Importantly, local level tax-collecting offices were never hereditary, and the families were not considered to be nobility.

Their influence derived from their function. Whether they retained this influence depended on whether they were able to raise the tax revenues required of them without alienating the taxpayers (ibid. 54).

The Maronites and the Druze dominated Mount Lebanon with primarily the Maronites holding the northern part of the mountain and the Druze governing the southern part. The 'feudal' system was well established here as well as in other areas of the region including the Akkar, the Beka'a and the South.

Bloody sectarian feuds and massacres marked a twenty-year period (1840-1860). Several elements contributed to this breakdown in relations, however the dissolution of the 'feudal' system was probably the greatest contributing factor (Kerr 1959:1-31). Other reasons included the Druze frustration and fear at the ascendance of the Maronites with their growing influence, prestige and wealth. Moreover, Great Britain, along with other European powers, was trying to gain a foothold and hence influence in the country. Great Britain

sided with the Druze in order to counterbalance French influence with the Maronites. Additionally, the Porte of Constantinople wanted to utilise this time of chaos and uncertainty to strengthen and centralise Ottoman rule in the area.

The clashes of 1860 were not between peasants and notables, instead the notables were able to deflect this struggle into confessional warfare. Fighting took place throughout the mountain, in the Bekaa, the South and even in Damascus. In less than four weeks from mid-May to June 20, an estimated 10,000 Christians were killed, 4000 more died from deprivation, 100,000 were made homeless, and there was approximately 4,000,000 pounds worth of property damage (Khalaf 1987:70; Churchill 1862:132; Hitti 1957:438; Salibi 1965:106).

Eventually, the European powers intervened to end the fighting and agreed to send in French troops. Under pressure from the French, the Ottomans were forced to pay symbolic indemnities to the Christians, for Ottoman garrisons' participation in the massacres. France, Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia, Turkey and later Italy signed a new organic statute, called the *Règlement Organique*, guaranteeing the autonomy of the Mutasarrifyah of Mount Lebanon. It was concluded that a Christian Mutasarrif (governor-general) appointed by the

Sublime Porte, but approved by the signatory powers, would rule the country. The new constitutional agreement granted equal rights to all citizens and nullified all feudal privileges in the mountain. Mount Lebanon under this new regime was divided into seven sub-districts and each district was ruled by a Qai'm Maqam (sub-governor) of the religion or sect prevailing in the area. This political arrangement was clearly a Christian preserve, three were Maronites, one Greek Orthodox and one Greek Catholic, and only two of seven were non-Christians; one Muslim and one Druze. It is important to note that the 'confessional' system had already taken solid roots, and at this time many other appointments were made on the basis of religious affiliation (el-Khoury 1960: 29-30).

The European powers that intervened in the Near East considered the problems in the Lebanon to be based on communal identities, and therefore dealt with each community separately. Picard (1996:20) argues that this European understanding of the Near East is responsible for transforming conflicts rooted in socio-economic inequalities and change into inter-communal ones.

It is important to note that prior to the intervention by the great powers, the Sublime Porte had in 1842 established a regime of territorial division. This was an attempt to put an end to the near-autonomy experienced by the Lebanese

emirate and was the first time that a division between Maronites and Druzes was officially recognised politically. There was to be, along with a Maronite and Druze prefect, a council of representatives from each community—which has symbolised the Lebanese political system since that time.

During the Mutasarrifiyah era, Mount Lebanon's contacts with the West were stepped up and missionary activities increased exponentially; especially by the French, Americans and the British. In 1866 and 1875 respectively, the Syrian Protestant College, later known as the American University of Beirut (AUB), and its French counterpart, Université Saint Joseph (USJ) were established.

Legislation governing social service organisations dates back to this period and in 1909 the Ottoman Turkish regime decreed that the establishment of a voluntary association must be made known to the authorities ('notification'). The origin of this requirement relates to the desire on the part of the state to criminalise the existence of secret societies. Most of the work at this time was carried out through religious institutions and the Church, which had established several charities. For nearly half a century, until the beginning of World War I, Lebanon experienced a period of unity, peace and prosperity reminiscent of the Ma'anid and Shihabi emirates.

World War I brought this peace to an end. The Turkish pound was devalued, the Allies blockaded the sea, and the imperial army had become an occupation force and had claimed the grain harvests at a time when Lebanon experienced a devastating plague of locusts. This combination of factors caused a severe famine in which thousands perished, and thousands emigrated. There were calls among the population for independence from the Ottoman Empire—some desired autonomy with French protection, some complete autonomy and others wished to be part of a unified nation that comprised the entire Syrian region. In the end, French ambitions and the desires of their local clientele prevailed, and France was granted mandate powers over Syria and Lebanon following the war.

### **C. The French Mandate: reinforcing the power of the merchants, bankers, and notables**

The San Remo conference of 1920 following WW I granted France the mandate over Syria and Lebanon. The King-Crane Commission sent by US president Woodrow Wilson to determine the wishes of the people of Syria, Mount Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq reported that the majority of Syrians favoured a special autonomous status for Mount Lebanon within a larger Syrian state. The

Maronites called for an enlarged Lebanon (one closer to the Shihabi and Ma'anid eras of the Mutasarrifiyah period) under French protection. Others in the region rejected this proposal and called for an Arab Syrian kingdom under Emir Faisal. However, in the end French and Maronite economic interests and prestige proved to be much more powerful than the appeals of the majority of the people in the region, and in September 1920 General Gouraud, the French High Commission in Syria and Lebanon, proclaimed the 'restoration' of Greater Lebanon. In Syria, opinion was deeply outraged. This new Lebanon was almost double the size of the mountain and the population had been increased by 50 percent.

The new Lebanon, though it was much more economically viable due to the addition of the outlying regions, lost its internal cohesion and equilibrium. Muslims, who rejected being brought into a country where they were considered a minority, mostly populated the annexed areas. 'As events were to show it was like introducing a Trojan horse into the body politic of Mount Lebanon' (McDowall 1986:10). The population of the attached territories were largely Sunni Muslim from Tripoli, the Akkar and Sidon, and largely Shi'ite Muslim in the Beka'a valley and the southern districts east of Tyre and Sidon. The main opposition came

from Sunni Muslims because, although they welcomed the end of Turkish rule, they wanted no part in a state characterised by Franco-Maronite domination. They still retained nostalgia for their privileged position under the Muslim Turkish Empire, and desired a connection to a greater Arab nation. Under the French Mandate, which ruled that political representation in Lebanon functioned through communal organisation, the Sunnis became a minority. From this time until the present day, arguments over the distribution of power between Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims have basically dominated the political scene.<sup>6</sup>

The French were particularly concerned to keep the central administration of the government weak. This had something to do with the fact that merchant and banking interests dominated the Lebanese economy. But maybe more significantly, it was also the result of a situation in which the ability of the notables to satisfy their political 'clienteles' depended on their capacity to provide them, personally, with resources and services, which in a better developed administration would have been catered for by the bureaucracy itself. The High Commission insisted that the seats in the new parliament be allocated to the

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<sup>6</sup> Significantly, during the recent civil war Shi'ite and Druze leaders have been able to take advantage of this struggle for central power between Maronites and Sunnis in order to galvanise and build mini-kingdoms in their respective regions the South and the Shuf.

sects in rough proportion to their numbers within the population at large. It was inevitable that most of those elected would come from the country's leading families, whose power was based on their control over important economic and social resources (Owen 1976: 234-235). Their presence in parliament and hence availability for Cabinet office, then offered the possibility for a further increase in power. The fact that this option was open to Muslim notables as well as Christian provided an enormous encouragement for them to forget their opposition to the division of Lebanon from Syria and to participate in the new system, which they eventually did.

Initially the French tried to assuage Muslim fears of Maronite domination and secured the appointment in 1926 of a Greek Orthodox, Charles Debbas as President of Lebanon's constitutional Republic. As an Orthodox, he was much more acceptable to the Muslim and Druze sects than a Maronite would have ever been, and he was re-elected for a second term in 1929. Although the Mandate powers did make attempts to acquire Muslim loyalty, these measures were superficial, since their overall policy instead intensified the rivalries between communities and boldly favoured Christian interests, especially those of Maronites. Importantly, In 1932 Muslim fears were dramatically re-awakened

when the French authorities suspended the constitution for five years in order to avert the election of a Muslim, Sheikh Muhammad al-Jisr as president. This measure stunned the population of Lebanon, including Christians, who felt that they were forced to choose between the Mandatory power and their fellow countrymen.

There was a divergence of opinion within the Christian elite between those who believed that the French presence guaranteed the survival of the country, led by the Maronite Francophile, Emile Eddé. Eddé viewed Lebanon primarily as a homeland for Christians with a Mediterranean culture similar to France, and that Muslims should be seen as a potential threat to this concept of the nation and culture. The opposing opinion was that led by another Maronite, Bishara Khoury, who believed that Lebanon could only survive if the various sects shared an independent national identity and unity that came before all other concerns. He saw that the Maronites must choose between their French protectors and a positive relationship with the Muslim sects of Lebanon. Moreover, he believed that if the initial push for independence came from the Christians, the Muslims would be much more willing to commit to an independent Lebanese state.

## 1. NGOs During the Mandate

During the Mandate period trade unions and associations of all kinds were viewed with some suspicion. Irene Soltau (1949: 310) who wrote in the 1930s and 1940s about social responsibility in Lebanon describes the situation:

Trade unions were still very weak (1930s), and this not only because of economic and social circumstances. The Turkish Government—and *a fortiori* the French mandatory Power—adopted the suspicious and hostile attitude of Napoleonic Code towards associations of all kinds, an attitude which looks upon all groupings of citizens for common action as a danger to the unity and security of the State. In the early days of the period under review, the only groups resembling unions were temporary sporadic associations for the organization of a strike, or the urging of some particular grievance.

Large international voluntary organisations were quite active at this time. For instance the YWCA worked to raise awareness of child labour laws in the mid-1930s. Lebanon was going through a period of nascent industrialisation and the International Labour Organization (ILO), working through the Mandates Commission, tried to pass some kind of labour legislation. However, Lebanon was one of the last countries in the region to pass and enforce labour laws. In 1935 women and children were officially forbidden from working night shifts, the minimum working age was raised to 13, the maximum working day for women

was decreased to eight hours, and for a young person (13-16), seven hours. However, these laws came from outside influence and were not brought about because of domestic pressure, therefore, most of the laws remained unheard of and unenforceable. The YWCA, through classes, clubs and co-operation with other associations, worked to build awareness of this legislation. Gradually these labour laws were accepted and administered.

The work of organisations like the YWCA, the YMCA (founded by a Frenchman in 1930), the Beirut Rotary Club, the Franco-Lebanese Red Cross, and many others including religious organisations, was hastened due to the onset of World War II, and some were even given financial support by the Free French, who expressed their views on social questions through the 'Section Sociale du Haut Commissariat'.

#### **D. Patrons and Clients**

To a large measure, much of the socio-political history of Lebanon may be viewed as the history of various groups and communities seeking to secure patronage: client groups in search of protection, security and vital benefits, and patrons seeking to extend the scope of their clientage (Khalaf 1977: 187).

Pursuing the commercial metaphor, one could say that even during the Mandate and even more so after independence, social and political relations in Lebanon were essentially those of clientelism, and that "bosses" or patrons dominated the whole of public life,

from the village to the capital and the whole national territory (Picard op.cit.: 49).

Nearly all of Lebanon's political institutions and their functioning have to be seen in terms of patron-client relations, which are 'highly personalised, tightly circumscribed and reciprocal' (Khalaf 1977: 201). As stated previously, Lebanese culture is marked by persisting primary, familial, and religious identities. Strong village solidarities, especially local attachments and personal loyalties, are essential and extremely important in Lebanon. The country's history is one of principal communities seeking protection, security and the redistribution of benefits. Clients in turn promise patrons fidelity and loyalty, which will give him great latitude in political autonomy and opportunities to extend and strengthen the clientelist relationship (Khalaf 1987). The patron-client relationship involves mutually beneficial, but unequal relations, that both parties have an interest in maintaining (Lemarchand 1972: 75-76).

The patron-client system in Lebanon can partially be explained as a legacy leftover from the mediating role played by tax collectors and warlords up until the nineteenth century. The Ottoman Empire represented by the Pasha of Damascus or Sidon was replaced by the Mandate represented by the French High Commissioner; and eventually the Mandate was replaced in 1943 by an

independent state as the centre of political authority—the Republic of Lebanon. The one constant theme in the evolving Lebanese political system is the presence of the Lebanese patron, who plays a fundamental role in mediating between the centre and periphery.

The cessation of 'feudalism' did nothing to impair this system, which developed and grew stronger by enlarging and altering its mechanisms, modes of operation and spheres of intervention. The institutions of the independent state which were developed at the beginning of the Mandate and transformed before and after independence were imprinted with Lebanon's system of patronage. The Lebanese government became, in the words of Malcolm Kerr, a "broker" distributing 'guarantees to the recognized factions coexisting in the country of the means to defend their minimal interests' (1966: 188).

This fact left little room for organised political parties, because on the one hand, most economic and social interests could be represented at government level, either directly by the notable politicians or indirectly by one of the many sect-based organisations, like the Maronite Church or the Maqasid Society, the leading Islamic charity. The zu'ama 'preferred to subsidize development

programs through non-governmental, rather than governmental, agencies'

(Joseph 1984: 152).

The vacuum at the state level and the channeling of public resources through patron-client relationships and sectarian non-governmental agencies controlled by the zu'ama, reinforced the primordial affiliations rooted in family, patronage and ethnic-sects. There was a state, but no nation in Lebanon. The emergence of national loyalties was continually obstructed by an archaic ruling class attempting to reproduce the basis of its own existence. In the process, they reinforced social and political fragmentation and undermined the development of civic commitments (ibid. 152).

Moreover, an economy based largely on services did little to encourage the unionism or any of the other urban solidarity movements that might have provided scope for class based parties. What is more to the point is the close fit between the system of parliamentary representation devised by the French, a weak central administration and the type of economic and clientelist social structures that already existed in the area in late Ottoman times (Owen 1976: 234).

Realizing that the age of British protection was long gone, the Jumblatts of the Shuf played the French card as early as 1920. Members of the great Shi'ite families in the south like the Zeins and the Osseirans entered parliament in 1920 and 1922, respectively. But this represented a collaboration between "patrons" replacing collaboration with Istanbul during the empire, and [was] not comparable to the popular movement that inclined the Maronite community toward France (Picard op.cit.: 66).

The officials of the Mandate 'excelled at the art of manipulating rivalries and alliances' led the patrons to declare themselves indispensable middlemen between the French Mandatory power and the local populations, who for the most part, regarded French authorities as 'alien and hostile'. 'Their clients trusted only them and only they could muster the clients at the request of the French authorities...on the other hand...it was only through them that it was possible to reach the Mandatory power' (Picard op.cit.: 51).

### **E. Moves Toward Independence and the National Pact of 1943**

The British had put considerable pressure on General De Gaulle and the Free French to grant sovereignty and independence to Syria and Lebanon in 1941, and though they acquiesced, the French did not really lessen their influence. In

1943, Bishara Khoury was elected to the presidency and on his election convinced the Chamber of Deputies to delete the parts of the constitution, which granted the French control over Lebanese sovereignty. The French reacted hastily and imprisoned Khoury and his government. This single act, exclaimed General Catroux, 'unified the whole Lebanese nation against France in a single night' (Longrigg 1958: 333). The French, faced with British insistence, eventually backed down and reinstated Khoury and his government, and official independence was declared a few months later.

Lebanon's first elected President, Bishara Khoury, and Prime Minister, Riad el Solh, devised an unwritten agreement called the National Pact. This gentlemen's agreement was designed to foster security to the different religious confessions through Christian and Muslim compromises on power-sharing and the identity of the country. Lebanon would be 'neither Eastern or Western', but independent with its own 'special character.' The Christians agreed not to seek protection from the West and the Muslims agreed not to pursue union with Syria or any other Arab state. Lebanon would remain neutral in all intra-Arab conflicts, but would work closely with all Arab states whilst maintaining its sovereignty, and would continue its cultural and spiritual contacts with the West (Hanf 1993: 71).

Khoury and el Solh agreed that the president would always be a Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni, and later it was agreed that the speaker of the house would be a Shi'ite. All communities were to be represented in the civil service and cabinet along confessional lines and based on the population census of 1932<sup>7</sup>. A ratio of six Christians to five Muslims in the government was eventually agreed upon.

Source: McDowall, D. 1986  
**Relative Size of Lebanese Communities**

According to 1932 Census

Communities	Number	%
Figure 2.3		
Maronites	226,378	29
Greek Orthodox	76,522	10
Greek Catholics	45,999	6
Armenians	31,156	4
Others (Jews, Latins, Protestants, various eastern Christian groups)	22,308	3
		<b>52%</b>
Sunnis	175,925	22
Shi'ites	154,208	19
Druzes	53,047	7
		<b>48%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>793,426</b>	

<sup>7</sup> This census was disputed at the time by the Muslims, mainly Sunnis, who claimed that they were a demographic majority in Lebanon.

In 1958, Lebanon had a foreshadowing of what was to come in 1975. The government of Camille Chamoun ignored the basic tenets of the National Pact and sought to align Lebanon with the West by joining the Baghdad Pact with Jordan and Iraq in the face of ardent and vociferous Arab nationalism led by Gemal Abdul Nasser of Egypt. This proved to be a deadly and dangerous political path, and when in 1958 he sought to extend his term in office, the state became immobilised in the wake of sectarian warfare. The army, led by General Fouad Shehab, refused to intervene on the grounds that the army could not act in order to maintain a particular government in power as it would destroy the army's impartiality and cohesion. After the fall of the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq, US Marines were deployed in Beirut. Both Christians and Muslims were anxious for Chamoun to be replaced and a new president was soon elected.

General Shehab was viewed as a President of reconciliation (McDowall 1986: 12). His shrewd neutrality during the 1958 Civil War earned him respect from all quarters. He initiated aggressive development programmes and was largely successful as a president, 'though he failed to resolve the contradiction between the need for strong government and public sector, and well established patterns of political and economic behaviour' (McDowall op.cit.: 13). Moreover,

although his presidency is generally hailed as an achievement, issues concerning the National Pact were not modified.

The influential Lebanese political scientist, René Aggiouri exclaimed that the National Pact was 'the unwritten expression of the will of the different Lebanese minorities to coexist within the structures of an independent and sovereign state' (Aggiouri cited in Hanf: 1996: 72). However the vagueness of the pact has been blamed for Lebanon's unstable foreign policy since independence. 'The conflict between the pro-French and pro-Arab orientations soon became outdated with the collapse of the French colonial power; this 1943 arrangement had nothing to say about the Arab-Israeli conflict after 1948, the US-Soviet Cold War, or the various inter-Arab Cold Wars' (Salem 1992: 2-3).

Implicit in the National Pact had been an assumption about the relative proportion that each confession constitutes in the Lebanese State. These proportions were based on the only official census Lebanon has ever had, which was carried out in 1932. Obviously, the numbers have not remained static, and though this is widely acknowledged, no government dares to carry out another census because of its political sensitivity. Demographic surveys in the 1970s revealed that the birthrate among Lebanese Shi'ite women was on average 58

per cent higher than the birthrate for Christian women (UNDP 1997). Therefore the Muslim population, especially Shi'ites, have experienced a dramatic increase over the last 70 years and it is the Shi'ites in particular who are believed to have become the largest sect. The Lebanese government's persistence in clinging to the myth of the 1932 census is damaging to all of Lebanon's communities, because without an accurate statistical record any measurement of the effectiveness of development programmes will be defective. The Lebanese government and its people must summon the courage to face basic demographic facts concerning their state. Moreover, it is understandable that those groups who feel disadvantaged by this lack of transparency will eventually demand their fair share of state benefits, especially in view of the fact that positions in the government and other offices are allocated according to the size of the community.

#### 1. NGOs after Independence

Due to the fact that the political leadership established the sects as the basic political element instead of the Lebanese citizen, most of the Lebanese voluntary organisations emerged through various religious channels. Soltau (1949: 317)

describes the work of voluntary organisations as a welcome addition to the work of the state.

The idea that society and the State are responsible for the welfare of citizens is growing, while the State accepts and welcomes co-operation with voluntary agencies.

During the 1960s under General Shehab's regime, an attempt by the government was made to work with NGOs (voluntary associations) in capacities such as social work and community building. During this time many organisations went beyond charity and relief and worked to establish a spirit of unity and co-operation. A group of NGOs was established which aimed at 'deepening social consciousness and building a society of justice, equality, freedom, participation, development and peace' (Lam'ha Tarikhiyah 1997). NGOs were present in most regions of Lebanon. At the time NGOs which had been established for 150 years in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, 120 years in Tripoli and Sidon, 30 years in the Shuf, and 25 years in the South, Beka'a and the southern suburbs (ibid.). However, the majority of these organisations were sectarian, and it is important to stress the familial and sectarian nature of the local NGO sector, which is still an influential component of the local NGO sector today.

Family associations are also a unique and important feature of the Lebanese society. As far back as 1860, these associations began to appear in order to provide security, protection and welfare, where prevailing patron-client networks or the administration could not (see Khalaf 1987: 161-184), and they have continued to exist and even flourish during the recent civil war.

Since its independence, consecutive Lebanese governments have failed to provide a strong state capable of even providing the minimum for its citizens (education, health and security) therefore family associations, local NGOs and INGOs have had to provide a large variety and number of services.

#### **F. The Creation of the Merchant Republic**

Although General Henri Gouraud, the first French High Commissioner in Beirut wrote that military control of the Levant allowed for the entrance of French capital, this in reality had been taking place for some time before the end of the Ottoman Empire. By the time that Ottoman rule was coming to an end, the Lebanese economy was fully a part of the world capitalist system 'through the export of silk and primary agricultural foodstuffs; local markets had been opened to products manufactured in Europe, and capital had been invested on massive

scale by the major industrial countries' (Picard 1996: 37-38). French intervention in the Lebanese economy just quickened the pace of this ongoing growth.

The French did accomplish a great deal towards building infrastructure and pursuing administrative reform and organisation. However, due to the type of economy that was envisioned they also advocated a large repressive apparatus and a rudimentary civil administration with limited administrative services. For the most part medical, educational and social services were left to the non-profit communal organisations or NGOs.

And while France's effort to equip the country remained limited, some of the Lebanese landowners, traders, and bankers with connections to French capitalism profited from closer relations with France and enjoyed an undeniable prosperity. The tradition of a liberal state with modest financial resources and power of intervention was thus inscribed in Lebanon's history during the Mandate, and from then on, this tradition carried great weight in the country's political economy (Picard *ibid.*: 39).

Since its independence in 1943, Lebanon has adopted a liberal economic system that gave the private sector freedom of movement in the economic field, including financial and monetary aspects, with no restrictions imposed on currency transfers and external trade. The creation of the service economy was solidified after independence from 1948 to 1958. There were various internal and

external forces since the 19th century that worked to create an outward looking environment. Following the declaration of independence the Lebanese state reached its zenith in the 1950's Merchant Republic (Gates 1998:136). This openness gave Lebanon a comparative advantage in the region and enabled it to attract Arab and foreign capital and investment. Beirut became an important regional trade and financial centre. Beirut banks were able to garner a large share of Arab deposits, especially those obtained through oil revenues from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States.

The vision of developing a mercantile capitalist country expounded by Lebanon's 'New Phoenicians' leadership established policies that would support a strong currency, mobilise domestic private capital and attract foreign investment, promote a growing variety of service exports, and maintain healthy fiscal and external accounts. For ten years (1947-1957) both the Khoury and Chamoun administrations adopted policies based on these general principles. Consequently, macroeconomic fundamentals improved, as policies and institutions sustained a strong gold-backed currency, a multi-based exchange rate, low (if repressed) inflation, and surplus fiscal budgets. This economic

environment instilled international confidence in Lebanon. However, Gates (ibid.: 137) points out that these guiding principles and policies:

...did not aim at promoting socio-political stability in the new nation-state, nor at executing public development programmes. Instead the power bloc attempted to counter opposition to negative economic outcomes by a generous application of patron-client politics and pork-barrel projects.

The establishment of a strong currency that facilitated international trade, finance and services was highly successful. The growth of surpluses and gold reserves also endowed policy makers with a high degree of control over money management.

The FAO described Lebanon's fiscal policies from 1948-1958 as conservative, deflationary and designed to promote trade and services. Today the same policies continue to be implemented. However, unlike stylised fiscal management in the East Asian export-oriented model, Lebanon's budgetary management was not conducive to industrialisation and employment creation. And though Lebanon's private credit system favoured tertiary over other economic activities, the government did not try to offset negative consequences by employing fiscal policies to develop labour intensive, export-oriented industry

(as in the East Asian model) or to transform traditional agriculture (Gates op.cit.: 140).

Given Lebanon's economic model and the primary roles of the private domestic and foreign sectors, public spending was concentrated on meeting the physical infrastructure needs of rapidly growing trade and services. Policy makers did not seek to fund publicly other (large) supply-side requirements of industrialisation, nor to fill any investment gap in industry or agriculture, which required much larger capital flows and stocks with their high capital-output ratios than the tertiary sector. Moreover, these policies were not counterbalanced by tax and other measures to encourage private investment in the neglected sectors.

In short, the objectives of an open economy in Lebanon did not include industrialising rapidly, strengthening the role of the state, or increasing efficiency through market mechanisms. Rather, they aimed at developing an external service economy, which required greater international confidence, and second, sustaining its agriculture and industrial sectors by expanding exports to the region. As planning was not part of this strategy, the issues of promoting long-run economic growth, structural change, and equity among others were avoided (Gates op.cit.: 86).

High profits and rapid turnover rates encouraged investment in other services. By contrast, lower incentives, such as lower profits and higher uncertainty, and higher capital requirements in agriculture and manufacturing reduced their attractiveness to potential investors (Gates *ibid.*:145).

Whilst Lebanon's model of an open service-oriented economy was relatively successful in mobilising and intermediating financial capital, it paid little attention to developing human capital and employing its labour force effectively. Typical of underdeveloped economies, surplus labour in Lebanon's traditional agriculture sector was high, and employment creation in other sectors was not a major priority of the state at all.

Without the investment incentives for the expansion of labour-intensive industries their growth in Lebanon was too slow to absorb more than a fraction of labour in the traditional sector. Furthermore, the fastest growing areas of the economy; finance, transport and trade simply did not have the job generating capacity on the scale that was needed to absorb the unemployed, underemployed and new members of the labour force. Consequently, Lebanon's time-honoured method of dealing with this problem, large-scale immigration, persisted.

Prewar Lebanon did not have a genuine free market economy. Cartels and even monopolies were tolerated in the import trade and certain areas of manufacturing; the beneficiaries were politicians or persons closely associated with them (Gates op.cit.: 185).

This stratum had little understanding of the upwardly mobile middle classes in industry and services, and even less understanding of the resurgent dissatisfaction of the rural population. Following its economic philosophy and interests, the governing elite neither formulated nor executed policies to reduce income inequality in Lebanon. Gates (op.cit.:142) hints that income inequality was a major contributing factor in the country's 1958 Civil War.

The impact of income inequality in Lebanese society during this period is difficult to evaluate, but for reasons that went far beyond the economic, it probably contributed significantly to latent instability.

In 1959, President Shehab commissioned a comprehensive study on the overall situation of development in Lebanon. The Institution for Research and Training for Development (IRFED) Chairman of the Dominican Louis Joseph Lebret noted that 'the differences in living standards of both regions and social strata are excessive and an enormous effort is largely required to overcome them' (Lebret 1960: 25). Some direct consequences of the Lebret study were numerous electricity, irrigation and road-building projects initiated in less developed parts of the country. The telephone and power networks were

extended to some of the most remote areas and the national health system was improved. These policies did meet with resistance from the majority of Shi'ite and Sunni landowners in the south and north respectively, who feared that these projects and the concomitant strengthening of state influence would weaken their own economic and political eminence, as well as their dominance over the local population (Lechleitner 1972 as cited in Hanf 1996: 99).

The Lebanese miracle was without doubt based on Beirut's intermediary position that made possible the high growth of income in financial and commercial services, construction, transport and communications. It diverged greatly from structural changes traditionally once thought to be associated with economic modernisation (industrialisation). This is taken to mean a relatively rapid rise in investment, employment and value-added in the manufacturing sector; a decline in the weight of the primary sector; the transfer of surplus labour from the traditional to modern sectors, thereby increasing labour productivity; and a growth in domestic services with the rise of internal demand.

Lebanon's choice of a service-orientated open-economic model was successful in the medium run, in the first decade following WW II and its leadership elite implemented a Merchant Republic political economy that supported Lebanon's sovereignty and material sustainability.

Lebanon's open, service-oriented economy furthered the interests of the dominant elite, but it was less successful in contributing to nation-building and to constructing a socio-economy that met the needs of the majority of the population. Although the economy enjoyed high growth, its dependence on the foreign sector made it vulnerable to regional and international shocks and pressures, and its sustainability was always in question (Gates op.cit.:150).

Gates goes on to answer the question: Did this mode of development, however, have a tangible effect on domestic political and social stability?

Although available evidence shows no tidy relationship between Lebanon's economic model and political stability, conventional wisdom holds that it contributed to socio-political disharmony (ibid. 150).

### **G. The 1975-1990 Civil War**

The detailed events of the civil war in Lebanon have been well documented elsewhere and are beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, there is some general agreement on the factors that brought on and influenced the war, and will be put forth so as to give the reader a basic understanding of these theories.

## Major Dates in the War in Lebanon

April 13, 1975	Beginning of the war between the Lebanese Front and the National Movement supported by the Palestinian Liberation Organization.
June 1, 1975	Entry of the Syrian troops at the request of President Frangieh in order to prevent a victory of the radicals.
April 1978	Operation Litani: 2,000 deaths and 250,000 displaced persons following the Israeli invasion. Positioning of the UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.
July 1978	Beginning of clashes between the Syrians and the Lebanese front.
April 18, 1979	Proclamation of the State of Free Lebanon by Major Saad Haddad.
July 7, 1980	Forced unification of the Christian militias under Bashir Gemayel.
April-June 1981	Syrian-Israeli missile crisis.
July 17, 1981	Bombardment of Beirut by the Israeli Air Force: 300 dead. The UN arranges a cease-fire.
June 5, 1982	Operation "Peace for Galilee"; two month siege of Beirut by Israeli forces: approximately 22,000 dead.
Sept. 24, 1982	Following the massacres at Sabra and Chatila, a multinational force moves into Beirut for the protection of civilians.
May 17, 1983	Signing in Naqoura of a Lebanese-Israeli peace agreement. Shuf war; the Druzes drive out the Lebanese Forces and clash with the army.
October 23, 1983	suicide attacks on American and French members of the Multinational force: 299 victims.
Nov. 1-8, 1983	National dialogue conference in Geneva.
December 1983	The Syrian army besieges the PLO at Tripoli.
February 1984	The Amal movement and its allies drive the army out of West Beirut.
March 12-20, 1984	Second national dialogue conference at Lausanne.

Feb.-June 1985	Operation Iron Hand of the Israeli army in southern Lebanon ending in its fallback to the "security zone". Beginning of the "camp wars" between Amal and the Palestinians.
Dec. 28, 1985	Damascus Accord between Amal, Jumblatt's PSP, and the Lebanese Forces.
Jan. 15, 1986	President Gemayel rejects the Damascus Accord.
Feb. 20, 1987	Syrian army returns to West Beirut.
Sept. 11, 1987	An agreement between the Amal and the Palestinians brings the war of the camps to an end.
Sept. 22, 1988	End of President Amin Gemayel's mandate. In the absence of a successor, he appoints General Michel Aoun to form a government.
Nov. 28, 1988	Beginning of clashes between Amal and Hizbollah on the outskirts of Beirut and in the South.
February 1989	Clashes in east Beirut and central Lebanon between the Lebanese Forces and General Aoun's army.
March 14-Sept.22 1989	General Aoun's "war of liberation" against Syria.
Oct. 22, 1989	Taif Accord.
Nov. 5, 1989	René Moawad elected President.
Nov. 22, 1989	René Moawad assassinated.
Nov. 24, 1989	Elias Hrawi elected president.
Jan. 30, 1990.	Beginning of clashes between the Lebanese Forces and General Aoun's army.
Oct. 12, 1990	Syrian air attack puts an end to General Aoun's separatist government.
Nov. 6, 1990	Cease-fire between Amal and Hizbollah
Dec. 24, 1990	First post-war coalition government formed.

The pattern of political activity that emerged during the period right up to the Civil War was that of shifting alliances and coalitions between the various political groupings which, whilst having the merit of achieving compromise

between different interest groups, also prevented Lebanon from enjoying the strong government it needed in order to deal with the deepening economic and social problems in the country, which were discussed in the previous section<sup>8</sup>.

The cause of the war in Lebanon was very complex and multi-factorial, however three dimensions are readily recognisable: socio-economic inequalities, outside pressures and the Palestinian presence (Picard 1996). Socio-economic inequalities were very obvious as early as the 1960s. During that time, Lebanon was a prosperous country. It was a banking centre and the West's main gateway to the Arab World, not only politically, but also in trade. The main cornerstone of the economy was geared towards non-productive areas such as import-export, transit and retail, which—in addition to Western trade—lead to the destruction of Lebanon's productive capacity. This fact left the industrial/manufacturing and agricultural sectors weak and backward. Lebanon's choice of a laissez-faire economy lead to inequalities in economic development and in the share of wealth (Gates 1998). Concentration of income distribution and the existence of social discrepancies were apparent and posed a considerable dilemma. Thirty per cent of the national income went to four per cent of the population, whilst the poorest

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<sup>8</sup> See Kamal Salibi's **Crossroads to Civil War**, Caravan Books, 1976, and Robert Fisk's **Pity the**

50 per cent obtained only 18 per cent of the national income in the early 1960s (Corm 1994). The disparity in wealth cut across all sects.

The dimensions in society were also apparent geographically; in 1960 per capita income in Beirut was \$803 compared to \$151 in the South (McDowall 1988: 13). The divisions in society contrasted between prosperous Lebanon: Greater Beirut and the mountain society within its range (Kisrawan, the Matn, the Gharb and Shuf) and the 'forgotten' areas, the Akkar in the north, Jabal 'Amil in the south and the Beka'a in the east, where agriculture stagnated and the political economy of the poor inhabitants was controlled by absentee landlords or wholesalers. "Belts of Misery" which encircled affluent Beirut (and also Tripoli, Sidon and Tyre) illustrated the economic disparity within Lebanese society. These belts were formed by impoverished Lebanese hoping for the possibility of casual work in the city. For those groups living on the outskirts of this wealthy métropole, poverty and lack of political representation exacerbated feelings of alienation (Picard 1996).

Also during the sixties, various left wing ideologies flourished including those belonging to the Nasserist, Syrian and Ba'athist. These movements

provided a focus for those alienated from the system, and due to Lebanon's liberal milieu many disaffected groups from other Arab countries pursued these causes and their vendettas against followers of other groups on Lebanese soil (Salibi 1976). Lebanon also became a site of feuding between Arab governments and these exiled dissident groups. Many Lebanese felt that Lebanon's democratic and open society was being abused by neighbours who would not have allowed such liberality within their own borders.

The Palestinian issue is closely connected to the problem of outside influence detailed above, however it is worthy of a section on its own. The Palestinian community in Lebanon—a direct result of the Arab-Israeli War—were the catalyst that hastened the eruption of the civil war in Lebanon (McDowall 1988).

By 1971, the estimated number of Palestinians living in Lebanon as refugees was 350,000. The camps, where a majority of the refugees lived, were used as training grounds for war with Israel. Weapons, ammunition and equipment steadily flowed into the camps. By 1969 the Palestinians were conducting raids across the southern border of Lebanon, and Israel regarded Lebanon as responsible for this breach of security.

The Lebanese establishment, particularly the Maronite leadership, viewed the Palestinian movement with increasing frustration and anger. In their eyes, it was recklessly provoking Israeli military reprisals and more seriously it was undermining the character and institutions of the state. They viewed the Palestinians as lacking gratefulness for Lebanon allowing them refugee status, and as having no regard for Lebanon as a sovereign state (Hanf 1993). It was in this divided environment that the initial clashes between the Palestinians and the Lebanese army attempting to impose its authority occurred in 1966. President Charles Helou and Prime Minister Rashid Karamah came into direct public opposition; the President insisted on Lebanese sovereignty, while the Prime Minister declared Lebanon indissolubly linked to the fedayeen 's freedom of action. Syrian Ba'athists reacted against Lebanon, accusing it of betraying the fighters in a holy Arab cause, however the Saudi leadership asked the Lebanese President to stand firm against the fedayeen, arguing that the Palestinian movement was a threat to regional order through its spreading of revolutionary propaganda. It was obvious at the time that the governments in the region were quite willing to encumber the Beirut government with the Palestinian problem that they themselves wished to avoid (McDowall 1998).

In 1969, Nasser brokered the Cairo Agreement regulating relations between the Lebanese government and the PLO, which partially gave way to the PLO to carry on its war of liberation using parts of south Lebanon. A few months later Kata'ib (a mostly Christian militia) militiamen ambushed a Palestinian commando funeral procession leading to several days of fighting between the two in Beirut suburbs.

Officially the Lebanese Civil War began in April 1975 when bloody clashes erupted between the Kata'ib and the Palestinian fedayeen. Between this date and the end of the war in 1990, many wars have been fought on Lebanese soil, which involved local, regional (Israel, Syria, other Arab states, and Iran), and international (the United States, France and Iran) players.

#### 1. INGOs and their Contribution during the War

During the war, a plethora of NGOs, a number of them international, began working in relief and emergency aid. The war witnessed a quantum leap in the role and numbers of NGOs whose work was based mostly on the following (Abi Khalil, M. personal communication; January 1998):

- a) the direct effects of the war: loss of life, massive population displacement (estimated at 800,000), huge numbers of people affected by disability, unemployment, the destruction of infrastructure, and other social calamities;
- b) the near total absence of the state and therefore the cessation of public services and the further concentration of these services in the private sector.

During this period Lebanese NGOs were practically alone in supporting the needs of the Lebanese community. A handful of internationally accredited NGOs stood out as 'reliable' channels. They included Caritas-Lebanon, YMCA-Lebanon, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), the Maronite Social Fund and Al Maqassed Al Islamiyya. It has been stated that these organisations were sustained by a deliberate policy of European and American donors (Mardelli-Assaf 1988), and that other local NGOs emerged at the time, which were secular, specialised and the result of energetic concerned individuals.

During the fighting and indiscriminate bombing that affected the majority of civilian areas, NGOs provided emergency services and relief supplies to afflicted and displaced individuals and families in extremely difficult circumstances. However, between 1988 and 1991 many of the international NGOs left due to

fears for expatriate staff security and the link between foreign aid and the release of foreign hostages.

Co-ordination of relief efforts during the war was sketchy. International NGOs tended to rely on consortia that had originated overseas for specific purposes. One of those initiatives was put together by the Vatican in the 1980s. Initially 15 NGOs came together under the general direction of Caritas, and was comprised of large church-based organisations. In 1991, only four remained – Caritas, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Pontifical Mission for Palestine and World Vision, which formed the NGO Coordination Committee for Lebanon.

In 1988, several co-ordination arrangements were formed on an as needed basis. Encounter was one of those formed as an ad hoc committee of the larger NGOs after an International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) mission to Lebanon in 1987.

Two main groupings emerged from these efforts and became very important efforts in the following years. La Co-ordination des ONG en vue du Développement au Liban (CDL-ONG), headed after 1991 by Kemal Mohanna and the Lebanese NGO Forum or LNF, headed by Ghassan Sayah. The main difference between the two is that the CDL-ONG included a mix of foreign and

local NGOs, and the LNF included only local NGOs. One other difference is that the LNF has what is called a confessional membership base. Two of its members were Shiite, two were Sunnite, one was Druze, five were Christian, and three were non-confessional. Some international donors, especially NOVIB and Oxfam-UK, did not want to support an interconfessional group and had advised against the ICVA sending a mission to Lebanon. However, 35 other organisations opposed this and the mission went ahead.

One writer comments that 'Most of the major NGOs in Lebanon, for example, do not have large and active membership bases.' That they are not, in that sense, the organic outgrowth of social movements but, rather, have come about due to the initiative of a few 'entrepreneurs' who have filled in for the failing state in a time of crisis (Kingston 1995: 8). As Bratton has written in the context of Africa, they are narrowly conceived institutions, which have come about due to "default" (1990: 21).

Often in Lebanon, welfare service provision originated first as initiatives by private citizens; indeed the distinction can still be confusing with a plethora of local NGOs sponsored by self-serving politicians. Many of these NGOs came into existence during the war, especially in the 1980s when it was easier to attract

foreign funding through non-governmental sources. Moreover, most of the organisations reflect the lack of heterogeneity in Lebanon, as they are usually formed by ethnic, religious or political groups.

The thesis will now move on to explore Lebanon's relations with its closest neighbours, Syria and Israel before looking at the country's current political and economic situation. Following this the state of agriculture in the country will be described in depth. This is done in order to provide the reader with a complete as possible picture of the environment that the INGOs are working in.

## **H. Lebanon's Relations with Syria and Israel**

### **1. Syria**

Lebanon's relations with regional players—especially Syria—are very intricate and complex. In 1920, French annexation of neighbouring districts to Mount Lebanon declaring the birth of the Republic of Greater Lebanon left Syrian opinion deeply outraged. Between the early 1920s until Lebanon's independence in 1943, relations between Syria and Lebanon were governed and regulated by the French Mandate. In World War II political movements in both countries grew closer together in the struggle for independence from the French

*(The Lebanon Report, June 1991: 3)*. In 1945 both countries signed the Arab Pact, which implied mutual recognition and respect for each other's territorial integrity. The Lebanese advocates of a liberal economy, however, were fearful of Syria's economic nationalism and the dirigisme of its new military government in power since 1949; some even feared political unification and attenuation of Lebanon's ties with the West. In March 1950, the "Customs Union"—established by the Mandate—collapsed, and although this was economically disadvantageous for both countries, it gave further proof of their diverging political and economic directions.

Syria's policy towards Lebanon ever since has been based on three elements: the Pan Arab ideology of the Ba'ath Party, the historical loss of integral areas of "Syria" to form the Greater Lebanon, and the strategic imperatives in the region since 1948. This policy was manifested by providing arms and ammunition to Lebanese pan-Arab enthusiasts in 1958, the encouragement of the Palestinian fedayeen military presence in Lebanon during the 1960s and 1970s, direct military intervention in 1976 when Syrian troops were deployed in Lebanon, and whose presence remains on Lebanese soil until this very day.

In the late 1980's when the balance of political influence was tipping its way, Syria pushed for a treaty with the Lebanese government. In May 1991, the 'Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination' was signed between both countries. It established 'distinctive relations' with Syria, created linkages on the political, military, internal security, and economic planes. It also consolidated '...their brotherly relations in facing their common future and fate' (Article One: Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination). Some Lebanese leaders praised it as a long overdue formalisation of co-operative relations, others criticised it as being a contract between unequal partners; therefore bringing Lebanon under greater Syrian control.

Clearly the Syrian leadership has applied itself to placing the Lebanese state under Syrian tutelage through avenues of military interventions, political pressures, manipulating various Lebanese rivalries and alliances, and orchestrating close co-ordination between the two countries' economies.

## 2. Israel

Like Syria, Israel developed an ambitious strategy in Lebanon. Since the settling of the Palestinian resistance on Lebanese territory, Israel's policy has been dominated by several factors; ensuring the security of its northern borders,

undermining the PLO, and signing a peace treaty with Lebanon. At one point, Israel was embarking on a close relationship with the Maronite leadership. To Israel, however, this alliance was far from being strategic and always came second to its own interests.

In the 1960's and 70's, the sequence of violence of Palestinian-Israeli incidents accelerated enormously. In 1978, Israel invaded south Lebanon then launched a complete invasion four years later in 1982, ostensibly to drive the PLO out of the country, and to deal a significant blow against Syria's growing influence. Subsequently, both goals proved to be evasive. This invasion in particular dealt a severe blow to the already frail Lebanese central government, which lost its ability to collect revenues, and created a *de facto* situation of geographical, political and economic division in the country. Under the wake of its army, Israel pushed for a peace treaty with Lebanon. In May 1983, that treaty was signed; it made provisions for the Syrian army's pullout from Lebanon while it guaranteed Israel "security arrangements" and recognised its right to police the South. It was clear at the time of signature that it was not going to stick without Syria's acquiescence. For the first time in its history, Israel found itself

withdrawing unilaterally and empty-handed. In 1985, Israel withdrew to a 15Km border zone, which it occupied until May 2000.

The most disastrous effect of the war of 1982 was the chain reaction of confrontations between and within communities...a new outburst of civil war that was to leave Lebanon wounded and bled white (Picard op.cit: 121).

Briefly, Syria and Israel have both fuelled sectarian politics in Lebanon through manipulating various religious and political parties as well as individuals. They have also impacted the system through direct and indirect military action.

### **I. The Current Political Situation**

Despite nearly ten years of peace following 16 years of war, the confessional system in Lebanon has been strengthened and cemented. Geographical areas that used to be characterised as multi-confessional are now mostly homogenous, the result of the forced dislocations of war which affected more than 50 per cent of the population.

Confessionalism has, however, also become more equitable, with the decline of political and demographic weight of the Christians—especially following the intra-Christian war of the late 1980s and early 1990s—and the rise to greater national prominence of the Shi'ite community after many years of social, economic and political neglect. This change has been reflected in the

Ta'ef Accords of 1989, which declared the birth of the Second Republic, and equalised, fortified and legally recognised the confessional system for the first time. Parliamentary seats are now divided on a 5:5 ratio and the power of the executive offices of the state have been realigned to reflect this new balance altering Lebanon's republican structure for one where the President is pre-eminent to one where power is more evenly divided between the president (Christian), the prime minister (Sunni) and speaker of the assembly (Shi'ite)—a system which has been dubbed "the troika".

Finally, the modification and solidification of the confessional system have also thrown up a slightly mutated pool of elites. Along with the traditional elites whose positions have been revived since the end of the war are new elite groups, such as the current Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, a multi-billionaire who had previously renounced his Lebanese citizenship for Saudi nationality, and wartime militia leaders, who made tremendous profits from the war (Picard op.cit.:144). An amnesty was granted to those involved in wartime atrocities<sup>9</sup>,

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<sup>9</sup> An exception to this pardon is the ex-leader of the now banned Lebanese Forces, Samir Geagea. The Lebanese Forces were a Christian, mostly Maronite.

and most of the militia leaders have had their participation in wartime Lebanon fully legitimised by being included in the post-war government (ibid: 155).<sup>10</sup>

Rafik Hariri has put a massive amount of effort and investment into his reconstruction plan, called Horizon 2000<sup>11</sup>. The cornerstone of Horizon 2000 is Solidere, a private holding company granted the responsibility for reconstructing the entire downtown area. The overall goal is to make Lebanon and Beirut into a major regional financial and commercial centre.

Despite early visible progress the programme remains narrowly focussed and work has come to a near standstill in the last three years (1999-2001). There is a clear lack of planned investment in the social infrastructure of the country, for example, allocations for upgrading the Beirut airport receiving almost as much as the health and education sectors combined. Moreover, in order to maintain investor confidence, both the Hariri and the Hoss<sup>12</sup> governments were forced to implement an austerity programme, which has meant among other things the

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<sup>10</sup> Picard warns that this participation can be expected to produce a qualitative change in the orientation of the system toward what she calls a "war induced" notion of political responsibility based not so much on generating and maintaining a national elite consensus, but on the promotion of the more parochial interests of their own respective factions and communities.

<sup>11</sup> See Tom Pierre Najem's **Lebanon's Renaissance, The Political Economy of Reconstruction**, Ithaca Press, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Salim el Hoss was Rafik Hariri's predecessor.

freezing of public sector wages, whilst private sector profits soar. The result has been a significant degree of social tension.

All of this is entirely consistent with the logic of the confessional system—effective at providing the minimum conditions for the pursuit of private profit, powerless and immobile when it comes to promoting a more equitable socio-economic development process (Kingston 1998: 10)

Thus, along with the Ta'ef Accord, the nature of the reconstruction programme provides a strong indication that the confessional system has returned more powerful than ever, proving, as Picard argues, that it is 'the most immediately operative part' of Lebanon's structure (Picard op.cit.: 157).

## **J. Current Economic Status**

The outbreak of war in 1975 interrupted the normal course of development in the country, and resulted in large-scale economic destruction and decay, as well as the disruption of Lebanon's regional role as an intermediary.<sup>13</sup> If one takes the evolution of the minimum wage as an example of the collapse in standards of living that resulted from the war, one finds that in terms of 1990 US dollars, the minimum monthly wage fell from \$279 in 1975 to \$65 in 1990, thus losing three-

quarters of its purchasing power. The UNDP has outlined Lebanon's major losses due to the Civil War:

- The large number, estimated at 65,000, of citizens killed (Labaki and Rjeily 1993) in addition to thousands of cases of permanent disability.
- The large number of Lebanese who emigrated, and migrated.
- Deterioration in the standard of the labour force at all levels, causing Lebanon to fall behind in scientific development, technological innovation and progress in management techniques that were taking place at the global and regional levels.
- Material losses estimated at approximately US\$25 billion (United Nations 1991: 33)

The impact of the war on public finances and on the country's financial conditions in general is very profound. The erosion of government authority gradually paralysed the administration and rendered it incapable of collecting and administering public revenues. From a budget surplus of 4.2 per cent in 1974, the situation turned into a deficit of 21.8 per cent of total expenditures in 1975. The deficit continued to rise reaching more than 50 per cent in 1981 and to peak at more than 90 per cent in 1988 and 1989.

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<sup>13</sup> For instance, macroeconomic data, notoriously unreliable before the war, became almost completely unavailable thereafter.

However, in view of the lack of reliable statistics and the limited coverage of collection of public revenues, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions on the tax burden during that period, which in its totality (including parallel taxes) may have been heavier than in the period preceding the war. Deficits were also caused by the fact that wages continued to be paid to employees of a largely non-functioning administration. Whereas the ratio of public expenditures to GDP did not exceed 12 per cent, on average, in the early years of the war, the ratio is estimated to have climbed to 50 per cent in 1991 (EIU report: 1996).

To finance increasing budget deficits, the government resorted to issuing treasury bills bearing high interest rates, and to borrowing from commercial banks and the Central Bank. This led to a chain reaction: the resulting sharp expansion in the money supply causing in turn higher inflation rates and a sharp deterioration of the exchange rate of the Lebanese Lira. The Central Bank found itself obliged to intervene in the exchange market, selling dollars to reduce the pressure on the Lebanese Lira. However, it lost a considerable portion of its hard currency reserves without succeeding in stabilising the rate of exchange, and repeatedly had to abandon its attempts. Thus, the Lebanese economy entered a vicious cycle with a deficit in the general budget being financed by inflationary

means, causing the national currency to weaken, the spread of the dollarisation phenomenon on a large scale, as well as capital flight. (UNDP 1997:35).

A distinctive feature of Lebanon's economic performance during the war years was the growth of the internal debt. The loss of state revenues, and the increase in defence spending are considered as the two main factors explaining this phenomenon. The ratio of the internal debt to GDP rose from 4.2 per cent in 1974 to 111 per cent in 1982. In absolute terms, the debt rose from LL 14 billion at the end of 1982 to LL 194 billion at the end of 1987, and further to LL 22,181 billion (\$14.8 billion) at the end of March 1998. Over 90 per cent of the debt was in the form of treasury bills denominated in Lebanese pounds, the bulk of which was subscribed to by the commercial banks, bearing real yearly interest rates ranging between 25 per cent and 35 per cent between 1987 and 1992 (UNDP 1997:36). The public debt now stands at 115 per cent of GDP (The Lebanon Report; Spring 1999 :8). The recent (1998-2000) government's external borrowing programmes over the past two years have caused the level of foreign debt to rise from US\$5 billion at the end of 1997 to an estimated US\$8.9 billion, or 52 per cent of GDP, at the end of 1999 (EIU 2000:11).

As a result of government policy and steady population growth, average income has risen only slowly since the end of the war. Indeed, the standard of living of many Lebanese dipped in the first few years after the war as inflation destroyed their wages. According to independent Lebanese economists, price rises between 1991 and 1995 led to a 10-15 per cent decline in the purchasing power of salary earners, who make-up at least two-thirds of Lebanon's workforce.

Around one million Lebanese, roughly one-quarter of the population, live below the poverty line, according to a 1995 report by the UN Economic and Social Council for Western Asia (ESCWA). Of these, ESCWA says more than 250,000 people live in extreme poverty, defined as a family of five living on less than US\$306 per month. The poverty line was defined as a family of five living on US\$618 per month. According to Antoine Haddad, a Lebanese economist, nearly 90% of workers aged between 20 and 39 earned less than \$1,000 per month in 1995. Regional disparities in living standards and income, which have long existed between rural and urban areas, have been exacerbated by the conflict and the focus of reconstruction on Beirut.

## **K. Agricultural and Rural Development in Lebanon**

One of the most serious problems facing the Middle East and North Africa is the region's growing inability to feed itself (Richards 1987:287).

No, the FAO doesn't co-ordinate with the NGOs. Are they working in agriculture? They don't know what we are doing and we don't know what they are doing. We try to co-ordinate mostly with the Ministry of Agriculture, but even this co-ordination is greatly lacking (FAO Country Representative in Lebanon: 1998).

This research looked specifically at INGOs working in rural areas of Lebanon.

The choice to focus on this type of development work was based on interviews with an official from the Ministry of Agriculture who told me that rural areas were particularly vulnerable, and that INGOs working outside of the capital were typically given a large degree of control. I was also told that there was a great deal of work to be done in agricultural areas due to that fact that there is an ongoing gap left by the lack of state intervention.

Lebanon's Ministry of Agriculture showed that agriculture in 1946 contributed between 16-20 per cent of the GDP, and more than one half of the population was dependent on agriculture for their livelihood (The American University of Beirut: 1946). Today that figure has dropped to about 8 per cent with only 7.8 per cent of the labour force directly dependent on agriculture (Jaber 1998:10). The agricultural population was estimated in 1996 at approximately

10.5% of the total population (see table below), and is an important source of foreign currency contributing close to 25% of total exports (ibid.).

Table 2.1	1974	1990	1991	1993	1995	1996
Agri. as % of GDP (a)	9	23	19	9	7	8
Agric. Population as % of total population (b)	14	16	15	12	11	10.5
Agric. labour as % of total labour (b)	20	9	9	9	8	7.8

Source: (a) Saade, Annual Report 1993, (b) Ministry of Agriculture, Census 1997.

### 1. Agricultural Regions and Crop Production

Tropical and European crops can be grown in Lebanon because of its diversified topography and climate. The interior plateau of the Beka'a valley and the narrow western valleys sweeping down to the sea have three advantages: mild winters, fertile soils, and large irrigation potential (Iskandar 1995:12). Several distinctive agricultural regions can be identified<sup>14</sup>:

a) The narrow coastal strip, extending from Tripoli in the North to Tyre in the South. This strip is mostly utilised for intensive horticultural production. Citrus fruits, bananas, and vegetables are cultivated in small land holdings, especially from the town of Damour southwards. The northern section of the coastal strip is cultivated mainly with bananas and vegetables, particularly in greenhouses extending from Zouk, south of Jounieh, to Chekka in the North. Most crops in this region are irrigated.

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<sup>14</sup> Map adapted from:

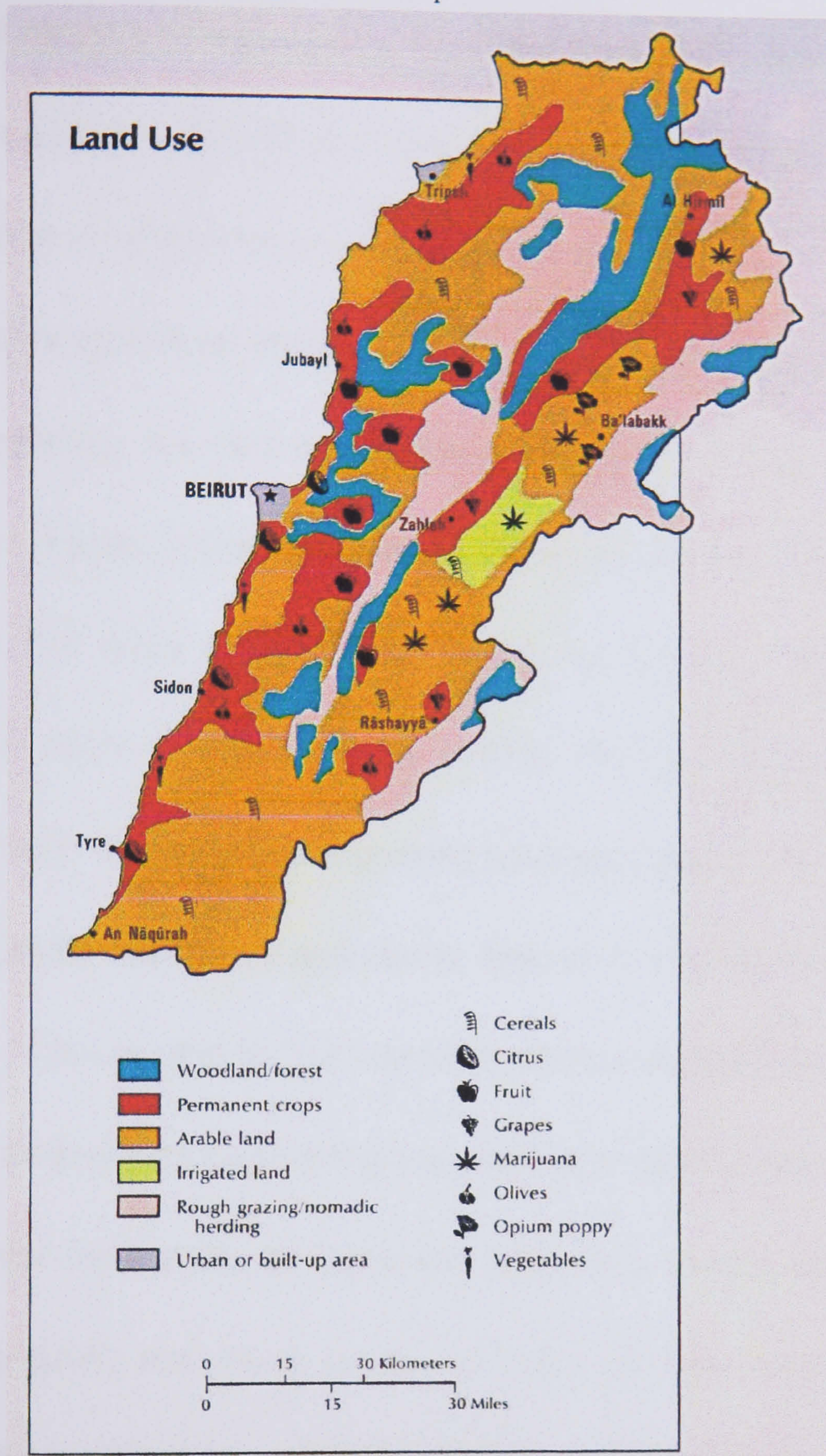
[www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map\\_collection/Atlas\\_middle\\_east/Lebanon\\_land.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/Atlas_middle_east/Lebanon_land.jpg)

b) The plains of the Akkar in the North and Beka'a where crop rotation patterns are employed for the cultivation of cereals, vegetables, forage, industrial crops such as tobacco and ground nuts, citrus fruits, and grapes. The production of cereals is necessary in crop rotation to maintain soil fertility.

c) The mountainous region, constituting the Mediterranean facade of Mount Lebanon, and extending from Jezzine in the South to Tripoli in the North. The narrow terraces cut into the steep slopes and valleys are cultivated with deciduous fruit trees, mainly apples, peaches, cherries, and other fruits. Some heated greenhouses for growing vegetables and cauliflower are also used in the region.

d) Other areas of agricultural production include the gentle slopes of the western side of the Beka'a Valley, the terraced region near Tripoli on the lower slopes of northern Mount Lebanon, and the calcareous terraced hills of South Lebanon. The slopes on the western side of the Beka'a Valley are cultivated mainly with grapes, while the terraced region near Tripoli is planted mainly with olive trees and the terraced hills of South Lebanon with olives, almonds, cereals, tobacco, and vegetables.

## Agricultural Map



Local needs for products such as cereals, dairy products, livestock, and fish are not met by local production, and must be imported. However, products like apples, potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, garlic and onions, as well as other fruits and vegetables, which exceed local needs are exported. Citrus fruits, which

are produced mainly for export, are the exception. However, two of the largest citrus fruit producers in the country have greatly reduced or halted production due to inability to compete with growing foreign competition.

Lebanon's agricultural competitiveness is closely tied to import and export patterns. Importantly, the ratio of agricultural exports to imports 'indicates the significance of exports in financing imports' (Jaber op.cit.: 10). According to the Central Bank, the share of agricultural imports as a portion of total imports increased from 18.9% in 1993 to 19.9% in 1996. Although the increase seems rather insignificant, it does reflect a growing food gap problem. Additionally, the ratio of agricultural exports to agricultural imports is increasingly low. It has declined from 14.8% in 1993 to 10.6% in 1996, which indicates a widening deficit in agricultural trade and an augmenting dependence on food imports.

The major destinations for Lebanese agriculture exports are the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia. In 1996, Lebanon exported 23% of agriculture and agro-industrial exports to the UAE and 13.6% to Saudi Arabia. In 1997, the countries were reversed with Saudi Arabia absorbing 15% of the UAE only 9%. Export to Syria has declined by 70%, from LL110 billion in 1996 to LL57.8 billion in 1997. This is probably due to the fact that Syria has a fully

developed agriculture sector and is in a position of exporter and not the reverse. Substantial (recorded and unrecorded) imports of cheaper Syrian agriculture products into Lebanon are also a contributing problem to the demise of Lebanese agricultural production. Lebanon imports over 60% of its agriculture and agro-food products from the European Union, with the majority of imports coming from Italy, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

Lebanon's main strength in competitiveness in the agro-food industry is its physical resources; fertile soil, diverse climate, and abundant water resources. Its geographical position is also advantageous providing the country with access to European and Gulf markets. However, Lebanon greatly lacks capital resources for investment and growth, knowledge of modern technology and market information, distribution, adequate infrastructure, as well as well thought out and planned government policies, which meet the needs of local producers.

## 2. Lack of Capital Resources

Capital resources, or the amount and cost of capital available to finance the agro-food industry are either non-existent or available at a very high cost. The problems are as follows:

— The rates of interest are extremely high, ranging from between 18% and 22% in Lebanese pounds and 12% to 14% in dollars. Moreover, collateral requirements are excessive;

— The standard duration of the loans given by banks is short and medium term, therefore inappropriate for long-term capital investments, which are needed for agriculture production. Many large landholders did not invest in long-term requirements—as they could take a decade to see profits. Tree cultivation, irrigation and the introduction of modern methods to produce fruits and vegetables comprised long-term investments. Many owners did not see results in increased output, revenues and profits for a decade or more.<sup>15</sup>

— An important condition for the provision of loans is founded on ‘personal relations and connections’ instead of the feasibility of the projects;

— Bank procedures for taking out a loan are difficult and very bureaucratic;

— The Central Bank requires several conditions on loans subsidised to the order of 5%.

Touma and Attallah (1998: 11) point out that:

Consequently, three quarters of all working and investment capital is derived from personal sources, which include savings, business profits, family money, and land sales.

### 3. Lack of Knowledge and Poor Infrastructure

In Lebanon there is a general lack of research and development for production and distribution. Though departments exist at the Ministry of Agriculture for providing this type of information, they are not working due to a lack of funds.

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<sup>15</sup>In the 1950s there were state funds available through the SCAIL (Société Libanaise de Crédit Agricole et Industriel du Liban). However, the loans were only available to large land-holders who regularly defaulted on payments. Seeing that many of these landholders were in government, the government did not enforce repayment and the system eventually collapsed.

There are three main obstacles related to Lebanon's infrastructure that hamper agriculture production and related agro-food industries:

– The cost of electricity is extremely high at 11.2¢ per kilowatt. For the region this is expensive compared to Egypt at 0.16¢ per kilowatt and 0.3¢ per kilowatt in Syria.

– Lebanon's main highway system is moderately developed, however, the road system surrounding rural areas where agricultural production and distribution takes place is highly inadequate.

– The high price of land has increased storage costs and the lack of modern storage rooms has negatively affected the quality of products.

#### 4. Insufficient Inputs and Distribution of Local Products

There are other domestic impediments to agricultural development in Lebanon, which include problems of land availability, lack of inputs and obstacles in distributing local production.

–Urbanization in most fertile areas is decreasing the total area of arable land.

–Land tenure and farm holdings are badly distributed in Lebanon. According to the Ministry of Agriculture 70 % of cultivable land is owned by only 15 % of land-owners. The remaining 30 % are small parcels, one or two *dunums*, owned by farmers for subsistence and production for the market. Moreover, land tenancy and share-cropping contracts are concluded verbally, and are of short duration, ranging from one season to one year. The short duration of contracts has had negative effects on the use of land.

—Certain agriculture inputs, such as pesticides sold to farmers, are often spoiled since they are not subjected to adequate controls by the government or independent agencies. Moreover, there are often a small number of firms distributing such products. The lack of regulation and the monopoly over certain inputs has increased the costs to farmers.

—Lebanon's main form of irrigation, which is based either on furrow and basin flooding or digging wells, is considered inefficient. Moreover, farmers pay for irrigation water on an hourly or per *dunum* basis, a tradition dating from Ottoman times, which fails to encourage efficient water allocation.

—Lebanese production techniques, whether they involve cultivation, pruning, weeding, fertilizer application, spraying, irrigation, and plowing are labour intensive and are considered to be primitive. The exception is in the Beka'a valley where techniques are more capital intensive.

—Farmers have no access to bank loans, which have prevented the purchase of new machinery and equipment needed to improve production.

Consequently, suppliers and distributors have filled the gap and provided credit, which has given them leverage to buy agricultural produce at low prices (Touma and Atallah op.cit.: 12).

A second factor is the distribution of agriculture products. Distribution involves several intermediaries and different types of channels. Generally, the intermediaries include primary and secondary wholesalers, retailers, and *dammans*, who either rent land from a farmer and take over the agricultural production process, or who buy produce from a farmer at a predetermined price and market it. Various distribution channels are used depending, among other

things, upon the volume of produce, the type of crop involved, and the region of plantation.

The various types of distribution channels are described below:

- 1) Producer-*Damman*-Wholesaler-Secondary Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer;
- 2) Producer-*Damman*-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer
- 3) Producer-Wholesaler-Secondary Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer
- 4) Producer-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer
- 5) *Damman*-Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer
- 6) *Damman*-Wholesaler-Secondary Wholesaler-Retailer-Consumer
- 7) Producer-Exporter
- 8) *Damman*-Exporter
- 9) Producer-Exporter/Wholesaler

Channels one to six are used for domestic trade, while channels seven and eight are used for external trade. Channel nine represents a combination of domestic and export trade. It is estimated that, in terms of domestic distribution, 38% of farmers use channels one or two; 21% channels three and four; 5% channel five; and 36% channel six.

Generally, 62% of agricultural products are handled by wholesalers and exporters, compared to only 38% handled by *dammans*. This serves to underline the importance of wholesalers and exporters in the distribution channels. Though, the strong bargaining power of the intermediary is often contingent on

the size of the farms and its geographical location. For example, farmers who sell exclusively to exporters are usually the owners of large farms in the Beka'a Valley and the Ba'albek-Hermel region. Therefore, exporters play a very important role in the Beka'a, wholesalers in the South and the Shuf, and *dammans* in the North.

The marketing situation in Lebanon? Ha! That's capitalism! That's called letting the market decide. And the market is not the buyers—it's the middlemen—the sellers. They decide. This is capitalism uncontrolled. And what happens? It becomes like a Mafia! There is no one responsible in the government to provide the checks and balances.<sup>16</sup>

I know of a farmer who tried to market chicken himself. He put the chicken in front of the store and then some of the main dealer's men stole it. The farmer caught them and the dealer's men beat the farmer up. You don't market your own chicken!<sup>17</sup>

The lack of a strong farmer's co-operative has relegated farmers to a secondary position in the distribution chain. Consequently, farmers are stuck between strong importers-distributors of agricultural inputs and strong wholesalers and *dammans*.

The duration of distribution is of concern since it affects the competitive edge of the agro-food sector, for example in cases when the expiration date of

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<sup>16</sup>"Ali" Personal communication: Ministry of Agriculture, Spring 1999.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

delivered produce is set to expire. Another problem is the lack of contract enforcement between farmers and intermediaries. This has, obviously, increased the transaction costs of distributing products in the market.

Marketing is one of the biggest problems. There is a syndicate and they decide the prices. Go speak to Saad Samhoun and Elie Maalouf. For instance, a farmer has 20 cases of apples and the price should be LL 1,000. The middleman will tell the farmer LL 800 and subtract another 10% for damages. Damages that are not actually there, but which he *expects* in transport! This is so bad for the farmer. The government! Huh...they do nothing. But I think that things may change. There is word that they are going to do a study. They are going to look at it. This could be potentially good.<sup>18</sup>

## 5. Deficient Government Policies

Historically, successive Lebanese governments have both lacked a coherent strategy and adopted few policies towards the agriculture and agro-food sectors.

Prior to the civil war, the government embarked on several agricultural projects which were limited to the provision of agricultural infrastructure, including rural roads and irrigation canals, as well as land reclamation. These plans included:

**a) The Green Plan:** The best known major agricultural project, the Green Plan, was initiated in 1963 but continues until the present day, and has set forth several objectives:

a) to increase the area of arable land; b) to rehabilitate rural roads and build new ones; c) to reforest land and conserve water resources; d) to introduce greenhouses and hydroponics in order to increase crop production; and e) to

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<sup>18</sup> Amine Jaber, personal communication, Ministry of Agriculture, Spring 1999.

develop water retention techniques, such as canals and reservoirs, and improve irrigation.

To this end, the Green Plan did several things. It rented out tractors, ploughs, and other terrace-building equipment to farmers. It also distributed citrus seedlings for free and seed wheat for credit, it constructed rural roads, and developed water retention techniques, such as canals, and reservoirs. The government worked closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Food Programme (WFP), and benefited from American and French technical assistance and expertise.

**b) Irrigation projects:** Lebanese governments have implemented several large-scale irrigation projects, the objective of which was to upgrade the irrigation network through the construction of dams, reservoirs, canals, and pumping stations. This included the Litani and Qassmiyeh irrigation projects in the South and the projects in the Akkar plain and the Miniyeh region of the North. However, all of these projects were terminated after the outbreak of war in 1975.

**c) Research, extension and education programmes:** Successive governments have also financed ongoing agricultural research, extension and educational programmes to develop and improve farmers' agricultural techniques. They began in the 1950s until this present day and resulted in the establishment in 1954 of the Agricultural Extension Department at the Ministry of Agriculture. The department's main responsibilities are publishing agricultural bulletins and disseminating research results to farmers. The department is currently inactive due to a lack of funding.

Currently, the government does a few tasks to assist agriculture. Among its most prominent efforts is providing price supports for cash crops, such as tobacco, sugar beet, and wheat to encourage southern farmers to stay in the South under Israeli bombardment and not migrate to the already over-crowded city of Beirut. It is also meant to encourage farmers in the Ba'albek-Hermel area to discontinue the production of illicit crops.

**d) Import control policies:** The government has adopted an agricultural calendar to protect domestic production of fruits and vegetables. The policy bans the import of specific agricultural products such as citrus fruits, apples, and

potatoes, and allows the import of some agricultural products after the authorisation of the Ministry of Agriculture. It also allows the import of particular products without a license during specific periods of time. The agriculture calendar has been used since the 1960s, although it was modified in 1992 and 1995.

**e) The Five Year Agricultural Plan:** In 1997, the Agriculture Minister announced the government's adoption of an agricultural development plan for the year 2000, within the framework of, what he termed, a 'general agricultural policy'. This plan was to be financed by both the government and international organisations such as the FAO<sup>19</sup>, and it aimed to:

- Increase net farming income;
- Maintain stable and competitive farm prices for agricultural inputs and outputs;
- Increase agricultural output by increasing productivity;
- Reduce agricultural imports by diversifying agricultural production;
- Conserve agricultural resources and achieve balanced and integrated rural development;
- Increase the efficiency of the marketing system for agricultural products.

The plan is currently on hold because of a lack of funding.

The Ministry of Agriculture in Lebanon has no plan! The Ministry does not exist. The Minister himself doesn't understand agriculture, and he says it. At least he's honest. He placed his key people in positions—as they all do—but he placed them as "consultants". If we have a question, we are told to go to them. They are told to take what they can. He says it—he's honest.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>I was told by the FAO country representative that one of the main difficulties in getting work done is that the FAO only gives one or two year contracts, so by the time one gets acquainted with the country and the situation on the ground, he is transferred to another country.

<sup>20</sup>"Ali", personal communication: Ministry of Agriculture, Spring 1999.

Additionally, the government of Lebanon has also signed several agreements with international organisations and other countries. These include a loan agreement concluded with the International Bank for Development and Reconstruction in the mid-1990s to develop the agricultural sector, with a particular emphasis on land reform. The loan is valued at \$31 million, of which \$28 million must be channelled to the Green Plan for a period of five to six years.

The government also agreed in the mid-1990s to a \$12 million loan from the UNDP to extend the first phase of the Rural Development Programme for the Ba'albek-Hermel region. The objective of the programme is to encourage farmers to abandon the production of illicit crops. However, the project is on hold because of a lack of financing.

In 1997-8 the government concluded a \$10 million six-year loan agreement with the World Bank and the International Fund for Rural Development. The money is to go towards financing irrigation projects.

The Ministry of Agriculture also concluded a deal with the United States in the mid-1990s for the importation of 3,000 cows to be distributed to small farmers. And a number of other agreements were set up during the Friends of Lebanon conference in 1996, amounting to \$600 million. However, none of the

financing has ever materialised, and as will be shown in Chapter Five, the cow programme turned out to be a disaster for the Lebanese farmers.

The final section in this chapter looks at the space that NGOs/INGOs occupy in today's socio-economic and political climate in Lebanon. It also explores how they are trying to change their *raison d'être* from that of relief providers to that of development institutions.

### **L. NGOs in Post-War Lebanon**

The Lebanese government after the end of the war launched a plan to rebuild national infrastructure. The sectors which most benefited were construction, industry, and the services sector, particularly the banking sector. However, the plan was largely deficient, as there was a lack of even distribution between infrastructure and social welfare in addition to prioritising urban areas over rural areas have left a large space for the potential of NGOs.

Today, there is no accurate register of the number of NGOs operating in Lebanon. Actual written numbers vary from 1500 (Mohanna 1991) to 4000 (Mardelli-Assaf 1989). Of these, the number of actually functioning NGOs/INGOs is much smaller with estimates as low as 100 organisations. Many foreign INGOs established offices in Lebanon during the war and have in many cases become

ostensibly 'localised', i.e. run entirely by a national staff and occasionally even registered as a national entity<sup>21</sup>. For instance, the YMCA is registered as a local and an international NGO, and its functions—whether local or international—depend on the type of project and where the funds come from (e.g. from the UNDP for local NGOs or from USAID for international NGOs). However, in nearly all cases, primary funding and direction for the majority of INGOs in Lebanon continue to come from their headquarters abroad; for this reason, they are still considered international NGOs. In other cases for instance, Caritas-Lebanon, although part of a world-wide federation, have become wholly independent and therefore are now considered a local NGO.

Exact amounts of funding disbursements by NGOs in Lebanon are incredibly difficult to accurately assess. Local Lebanese NGOs protectively guard their sources for fear of competition, and funds passed to INGOs may be accounted for twice—once through the INGO and again either through the multilateral or bilateral donors.

These qualifications aside, the UNDP reported that in 1996, the total external assistance to NGOs, including INGOs in Lebanon was 19.3 million

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<sup>21</sup> In most cases, international staff were forced to leave due to the war and the high occurrence

(UNDP 1997a). However, this number was way down from 1991, when total external aid was reported to be \$161 million (UNDP 1991). This massive drop in funds has caused Lebanese NGOs and INGOs search for a new *raison d'etre*. Their new role has begun to evolve towards self-reliance and a gradual transformation of their programmes from relief during the war to development afterwards.

### **M. Chapter Summary**

As we can see from the discussion above, a look at the Lebanese political system gives a strong indication of the type of environment the INGOs exist in. Significantly, Lebanon's socio-economic and political development has not been conducive to the emergence of a strong, centralised state. This has been due to a number of factors; including the confessional/sectarian composition of the country, which has resulted in delicate political structures that try to balance interests and thereby prevent the emergence of a primary national identity. This differential confessional system is reinforced by a patriarchal, kin-based social structure. Moreover, foreign intervention, first Ottoman, then colonial and finally

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of kidnappings of foreigners.

Syrian/Israeli (plus other players like Iran, Iraq and the US), through the pursuit of self-interest mobilised and strengthened these social cleavages. Finally, in important ways, the geography of the country, which historically was not conducive to communal integration but rather saw many groups living in near isolation in mountain enclaves.

The consequences of this absence of a strong centralised state have been that political and economic resources are distributed through patron-client structures as much as through formal institutional channels. Hence, the distribution of resources by the state, and national economic planning in general, is determined less by economic rationale and more by the political clout of individuals and groups, and the political bargaining between major groups. Small groups, economically weaker groups, and groups distant from urban political centres (or groups without foreign patrons) find themselves disadvantaged when it comes to receiving their share of national resources. Economic differentiation is therefore exacerbated by government policies rather than ameliorated by them. Lastly, rural areas, which are poorer than the urban areas and which are inhabited by less powerful sects/confessional groups/clans, find themselves neglected by the state.

In this context, room is created for INGO activity, particularly in rural areas. However, although the state may be weak or disinterested in these areas, that does not mean that INGO activity is unaffected by the same socio-economic and political factors. INGOs must be constantly aware that unequal distribution of INGO resources between confessional groups can be a source of tension. They must therefore distribute resources with reference to the confessional distribution of the population, as much as according to where the need is greatest. Moreover, INGOs must operate in an environment where kinship and patron-client relationships are important determinants of resource allocation and political capacity. Lastly, INGOs also find themselves working in rural areas close to neighbouring countries that have a vested interest in Lebanon and which may have economic links with the local population which are more important than the economic links with Beirut.

Since the end of the Civil War, INGOs working in Lebanon have had to redefine their role. From initially acting as relief-based organisations, they now have to reorient their aims towards a more developmental role. This change presents its own challenges and prospects for INGOs wishing to contribute to the rebuilding and development of the country.

The next chapter presents an overview of the methodology used in my fieldwork, as well obstacles and difficulties faced whilst attempting to obtain the data, which is presented in Chapters Five and Six.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The most salient aim of this project of this project was to see if the development needs of local people living in rural areas of Lebanon were being met and to what extent by INGOs? The obstacles to achieving this goal were many. The project was limited by time, funding, numbers of field researchers and access to certain areas.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, I will present the main research question and hypothesis, followed by a selection of subsidiary questions that were used in my fieldwork in order to answer the main research question and prove or disprove the hypothesis. This chapter will also attempt to explain the research design before presenting the methods utilised to collect the data.

An overview of the selected INGOs is presented in Chapter Four. The bulk of the fieldwork data concerning how the intended 'beneficiaries' view the work of INGOs and an introduction to the development scene in this country is located in Chapter Five. Data on the various relationships between the INGOs, the state, non-state actors, donors, and 'beneficiaries' is presented in Chapter Six.

Analysis, implications and applications of this data are also explored in Chapter Six.

### **A. Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The principal research question and hypothesis that guided this research are presented below:

#### **Research Question**

Do specific, selected INGO programmes in rural Lebanon produce the desired results stated by their personnel, outlines and mission statements; and to what extent do their projects and programmes meet the needs and expectations from the perspective of local men and women who are the intended beneficiaries?

#### **Research Hypothesis and Purpose**

Due to the absence of state-led development in rural areas of Lebanon, local men and women rely on INGO programmes along with other sources of support in order to meet their development needs. My hypothesis is that select and specific INGO projects will illustrate an ability to fill the development gap to a reasonable extent within the specific geographic contextual locations that they are situated.

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<sup>1</sup> This fieldwork was conducted during the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon.

I arrived at this hypothesis through research using secondary sources and speaking to academics working in the field and NGO personnel. The majority of the readings that I was exposed to prior to my fieldwork led me to conclude that non-governmental organisations were in many cases able to successfully provide some basic needs for impoverished farmers living in rural areas of the developing world and were working with the most marginalised groups in society.

My fieldwork attempted to answer several planned questions, which were intended to prove or disprove the stated hypothesis<sup>2</sup>. The main ones are presented below according to those dealing with the agents (INGOs and 'beneficiaries') and those dealing with the structural context within which INGOs work and beneficiaries live. It was not possible to obtain answers to all or even some of the questions in every context. The main questions included, but were not limited to the following:

## Agent Centred Subsidiary Questions

### INGOs:

1. What are the objectives of the INGO programmes/projects (general and specific)?
2. Is the ideology of the organisation expressed in the programmes/projects? If yes, how?
3. Are the needs of local men and women assessed? How?
4. How are the villages that are part of the organisation's projects/programmes chosen?
5. How are issues of transparency and accountability handled between donors and INGOs, and INGOs and local people?
6. Does the INGO include 'good governance' and/or democracy building skills in its development work? If yes, how is this accomplished?
7. Is sustainability measured? If yes, how?
8. Does the organisation monitor programmes/projects after they have been completed? If yes, how?
9. What is the level of co-ordination with the State, the UNDP and other development partners (e.g. the World Bank, local universities, the FAO etc...)?
10. Do donors influence the work of the INGO? If yes, how?

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<sup>2</sup> The actual list of questions that were used as a framework for the semi-structured interviews are located in the appendix.

## **Local men and women:**

1. How and to whom do local men and women express their development needs?
2. What is their level of contribution and participation in these programmes/projects of local people?
3. To what extent are women included in these programmes/projects?
4. Are INGOs accountable and transparent to local people?
5. Do INGOs include 'good governance' and/or democracy building skills in their development work? If yes, how is this achieved?
6. Are these programmes/projects sustainable according to local men and women?
7. Are the beneficiaries satisfied with the work done by the INGO?
8. Do the beneficiaries believe that their development needs are being met?

Whilst doing my preliminary research I postulated that the environmental context within which these organisations work has a significant impact on the positive or negative outcome(s) of the programme or project. Therefore, I also pursued the following questions, with the hope that I could have a greater understanding of the environment that this type of development work takes place in, and then better analyse the micro-programme/project within the macro-environment.

## Structurally Centred Subsidiary Questions

1. What is the historical and current level of state development in the rural areas of Lebanon where I visited?
2. From the perspective of the interested parties that I spoke to: What are the obstacles to rural development in Lebanon?
3. How does Lebanon's political and socio-economic environment affect the development work of INGOs according to the men and women I spoke to?
4. How do the regional political-economic pressures affect Lebanon's development process according to the people included in my fieldwork?
5. Do the political parties/militias affect the work of INGOs according to INGO personnel, local men and women and others that I spoke to? How?
6. To what extent do clientelism and patronage affect the development scene?
7. To what extent does confessionalism affect INGO's development work?
8. How do donor agendas impact the overall development process?

I realise that there are assumptions implicit in my questions. The questions point to the fact that the outcomes intended by the INGOs may not be the ones desired by the 'beneficiaries'. The questions assume that 'beneficiaries' are not a homogeneous group with identical perceptions of the needs of the village. It is perceived that the various interested parties (INGO headquarters, field personnel and donors) may have different perceptions of what constitutes development or a successful programme/project. It is assumed that the interests of the state will somehow impact the work of these organisations. It is also presumed that the confessional patron-client cultural context that these organisations are working in will influence the outcome of the programme/project.

## B. Research Design

**Units of Analysis and Points of Focus:** Generally in social science research there is a wide variety in what or who is studied. This work specifically takes individuals and to a lesser degree organisations as its units of analysis.

More than 400 interviews were conducted with local 'beneficiaries', INGO mission heads and field staff, and Lebanese government representatives.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, I interviewed representatives from various international organisations, including international donors, local political leaders, independent consultants, and academics.

Regionalisation is a striking phenomenon in Lebanon that greatly affects the development scene. Therefore it was necessary to view each region separately, as each region bears the mark of its particular socio-economic, political and historical predicament. This includes uneven state development, different climates and access to agricultural inputs, connections to powerful *zu'ama* or patrons, the weighty influence of Syria, the ongoing conflict with Israel in Hasbaya and the South, violence and destruction in the Druze/Christian

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<sup>3</sup>Many of the given names of interviewees are pseudonyms, due to political sensitivities and the wishes of the informants.

villages of the Shuf, and the strength and influence of political parties/militias (Hizbullah and Amal in the South and Baalbek/Hermel).

### 1. Units of Analysis

**a) INGOs:** Initially I interviewed personnel from several INGOs working in Lebanon, they included; Oxfam UK, The Quakers, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Save the Children Federation (SCF), the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), The Pontifical Mission, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Council of Churches (WCC), The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Mercy Corps International, The Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), and World Vision.

**b) Individuals:** Local men and women were interviewed from more than 30 rural villages in Lebanon where INGOs were currently working or where INGO projects had been completed within the previous year (1997). In addition, I went to several villages close to target villages, where INGOs were not working or had never worked and interviewed local people in an attempt to better comprehend the type of village chosen for INGO project inclusion from the point of view of local people.

The projects/programmes that I looked at included, but were not limited to, agricultural roads, construction of schools, sewage treatment facilities, irrigation networks, income generation programmes, child development programmes, provision of agricultural inputs, factory construction, semi and total rehabilitation of war damaged houses, and the installation of water supply networks.

**c) Government ministries:** Interviews with personnel from ministries connected to developing rural areas were carried out in order to determine the government's level of involvement in rural development, as well the level of co-ordination between the INGOs, government and other interested entities. The ministries included in this study were; the Ministry of Agriculture, The Ministry of Public Works, Electricity and Water, the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

**d) Other organisations/institutions/departments:** Interviews with personnel from other local and international organisations, institutions, and departments were also conducted in order to better understand the total development environment. Those interviewed included: the FAO, the UNDP, Green Line, GreenPeace, the World Bank, USAID, ChristianAid, UNIFEM, and the

Department of Agriculture at the American University of Beirut, as well as independent development consultants.

## 2. Points of Focus

In order to gain a broader perspective of my units of analysis, at this juncture it would be beneficial to delineate several points of focus, including various characteristics of individuals and organisations, their orientations and actions that occur in the political economy of the development environment in Lebanon at the time of my fieldwork.

**a) Characteristics:** The local men and women who were interviewed were for the most part characterised according to their gender, region of origin, marital status, educational attainment, income, occupation and level of participation and/or knowledge of INGO projects/programmes<sup>4</sup>. Specific INGOs as organs of social intervention and implementers of development programmes/projects were examined in terms of where they were working, when they were working, who they worked with, and according to the kinds of projects/programmes they implemented.

**b) Orientations:** As units of analysis, local people's orientations were also taken into consideration. These included; religion, political awareness and involvement, status in local, regional and international power relations, attitudes towards patron-client practices, feelings toward the state and INGO development initiatives, and their interpretation of the impact of foreign (Syrian, Israeli and American) interventions. INGOs orientations were examined according to their purpose, policy and procedures. Moreover, as organs of social intervention, the motivation behind their actions was also explored to some extent.

### 3. Time Dimension

The fieldwork for this study took place from January 1998 till August 1999. On several occasions it was necessary to re-visit villages where INGOs were working in order to see if projects where difficulties were encountered were actually executed.

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<sup>4</sup> Please note that due to the wishes of my respondents, some of the characteristics related to their identity are not included or in some cases altered slightly.

## C. Research Methods

The two types of interview techniques utilised in this fieldwork project were semi-structured individual and group interviews using both open and closed-ended questions. The decision to utilise semi-structured interviews for my fieldwork was based on positive previous fieldwork in Lebanon using this method. As will be explained below, in many cases individual interviews spontaneously turned into group interviews also using semi-structured techniques<sup>5</sup>.

**a) Semi-structured interviews:** Semi-structured, open and close-ended interviewing techniques were utilised in rural settings with men and women farmers, as well as with local government officials, and local non-governmental personnel. Semi-structured interviewing techniques were used in all initial non-governmental meetings, and were also used for the most part with government and donor officials.

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<sup>5</sup> I am aware of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and I utilised one of its central techniques; semi-structured interviews. However, visual-based tools, a key ingredient in the "basket of techniques" for PRA were not utilised.

**b) Group Interviews:** Group interviews occurred in the villages and were spontaneous as neighbours or passers-by would commonly join in the conversation. They seemed to be very curious and interested in participating in discussions concerning their lives and development in their village.

#### **D. Subjects of inclusion:**

- b) INGOs:** As my stated intention was to look at the work of organisations that had established projects/programmes in rural areas, only seven of the INGOs from the list above qualified for the study, they included; Oxfam UK, Save the Children Federation, the YMCA, the Pontifical Mission, the MCC, Mercy Corps International, and CHF. Importantly, four of the organisations were receiving substantial amounts of funding from USAID, they included; the YMCA, the Pontifical Mission, CHF and Mercy Corps International.
- c) Villages:** The villages where fieldwork was carried out were chosen based on the existence of ongoing or completed projects in the village, area of the country as I intended to sample all regions, and the accessibility conditioned by the agreement and co-operation of the INGO field officer or mission head. The villages chosen are located in six separate rural regions; the Akkar, Ba'albek-Hermel, the Beka'a, Hasbaya, the South and the Shuf.

- d) Individuals:** Men and women were chosen according to their availability and willingness to participate in individual interviews and group interviews. Typically, I went door to door in rural villages asking if individuals would agree to participate in my study.
- e) Government ministries:** The ministries that I chose to include were the ones whose work is somehow related to INGO projects or rural development. They included: the Ministry of Agriculture, The Ministry of Public Works, Electricity and Water, the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- f) Other organisations/institutions/departments:** The individuals interviewed from other organisations, institutions, and departments (e.g. the FAO, the World Bank, the UNDP, USAID, independent consultants etc...) were chosen because of their knowledge of the local development process, the work of INGOs in rural development in Lebanon, and/or closeness to the projects or programmes being carried out in these areas of Lebanon.

## **E. Data Collection**

In order to facilitate my work in rural areas, I hired two female assistants; Miss Michelle Obeid an MA graduate in Anthropology from the American University of Beirut (AUB) who is fluent in all Lebanese dialects, and Miss Lama El Zataari, a sociology undergraduate student from the Lebanese American University (LAU). The decision to hire only female assistants was taken because I believed that I would be able to gain easier access to female participants.

All interviews with local men and women were conducted in Arabic. Interviews with INGO and government officials were conducted in both Arabic and English. One interview with an international development consultant was conducted in French and Arabic.

## **F. Obstacles and Difficulties**

The obstacles and difficulties that I encountered were primarily associated with data collection. Below are examples of some of the difficulties I confronted:

- Some INGO personnel were unwilling to allow me to enter villages where they were working, or would only allow me to enter if I was accompanied by one of their representatives at all times.

- Some government officials were uncooperative and delayed interviews on numerous occasions;
- My own and my assistants' physical welfare was threatened on one occasion after leaving a project site;
- I was warned on numerous occasions by field workers that my life could be in danger should I chose to reveal the names of individuals and organisations in a public medium; I was also warned by a member of one of the political parties whilst working in the South "...you might disappear."
- I was working in areas, which were undergoing bombardment during interviews;
- Statistics concerning Lebanon, if available, are very unreliable;
- In some areas, female respondents were less willing to speak in groups with men;
- I was not able to travel to the Israeli occupied zone, where one INGO was working;
- I had to constantly protect my respondents from possible retribution from patrons, political parties, INGO representatives, landlords and government officials;

- On rare occasions, I encountered dialects that were very difficult to understand though my assistant, Michelle, was fluent in most Lebanese dialects.

### **G. Limitations**

My fieldwork research was limited by several factors, including time, budget and language considerations.

- Due to budget and time considerations I was only able to visit a limited number of project sites where the INGOs were working.
- Tape recorders were only used in interviews with INGO personnel and in many cases they refused to be interviewed on tape. Tape recorders were never used in village interviews. Notes were recorded in Arabic and occasionally in English. The notes were then translated into English. Most of the quotes in the text are exact translations of the Arabic notes, though importantly the notes in Arabic from the fieldwork are not claimed to be exact. I am very confident that I was able to get a good sense of what was being said by the respondents.

- All travel was conducted in my own personal vehicle, a 1986 Volkswagon Golf GTI. At times it was difficult to access villages where there was no pavement, and on one occasion my car got stuck in mud next to a bridge between two villages. Luckily, there were men working on the bridge and they helped to push us out.
- Due to the size of the country, in most cases, we returned to Beirut every night. However, in a couple instances we slept in villages with local families.
- We had to dress conservatively, with long sleeved-shirts and trousers at all times and seasons in villages.
- Although I have the Lebanese nationality, I was viewed initially by some people as a possible spy or someone from an INGO who could deliver promises of aid. This made it very important from the beginning to explain that I could not deliver any financial benefits to their village and that I did not work for any foreign government.
- Representative samples were impossible in the context of this study. Access to respondents was constrained by a combination of practical and political factors, therefore this work is more illustrative than representative.

## **H. Chapter Summary**

This chapter explored the methods used in the fieldwork, including the basic research questions utilised for obtaining information. It also looked at the research design, techniques and data collection. Additionally, it pointed out the various obstacles, difficulties and limitations encountered in the field.

The following chapter aims to provide a general overview of the seven INGOs that were included in the fieldwork.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE INGO PROGRAMMES IN LEBANON

The INGOs that were explored in this project are vastly different in terms of budgets, ideologies, motivation, capacity as well as their history of working in the country. Most began working in Lebanon during the war as relief agencies and have now shifted their focus from relief to development. This section will look at the INGOs, their motivation, history and programme ideology.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the aim of this project was to look at INGOs with established projects and/or programmes in rural areas of Lebanon. Seven INGOs were chosen based on the fact that they were international as opposed to local NGOs, and that they were working in rural areas of Lebanon. The following section is an overview of each INGO. It includes information on the historical development of the organisation as well as its current structure and stated objectives. The section also provides information on funding (if available) and an overview of their projects and/or programmes in Lebanon.

The discrepancy in the amount of information given for each INGO is explained by the fact that not all of the organisations had the same particular type of material available or documented, and some INGOs were more transparent than others concerning their funding amounts and sources.

## **1. Mercy Corps International**

Mercy Corps International exists to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive and just communities.<sup>1</sup>

This organisation is based in Portland, Oregon and has been around since 1979. Its roots stem from Cambodia's 'killing fields', when the movement of vast numbers of refugees sparked the interest of church leaders, media and entertainment personalities, and individuals in political circles in the United States. Initially, this organisation was set up as a one-year task force called Save the Refugees Fund. It was later incorporated into a global organisation now known as Mercy Corps International. The organisation's vision is located in the faith values that include Catholic social teaching and Quaker-Mennonite peace philosophies. It is stated that Mercy Corps provides assistance exclusively based

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<sup>1</sup> [www.mercycorps.org/profile/profile1.html](http://www.mercycorps.org/profile/profile1.html) (p. 1)

on need, without regard to religion or politics. In 1998 Pax World Service merged with Mercy Corps in order to broaden civil society and peace initiatives.

Mercy Corps states that in 1998 they have delivered food, shelter, health care and economic opportunity to over two million people in 21 developing and emerging countries, sent emergency goods and material aid to eight additional countries, and delivered \$57 million in humanitarian aid. They have provided more than \$500 million in aid to people in more than 73 countries since 1979. Their year 2000 budget was stated as exceeding more than \$100 million. The sources of funding are not clear, but it seems that a large portion of their funds come from government aid programmes.

The organisation's stated objectives are:

Mercy Corps believes in innovation, and we have become a world leader in helping communities recover from emergencies, build stronger societies and find long-term solutions to poverty.<sup>2</sup>

- We believe humanitarian aid should be an investment rather than a one-time consumption of resources. Mercy Corps targets countries in transition to democracy or plagued by civil, religious and ethnic conflict.
- We believe humanitarian assistance must not only meet basic needs, but also help lay the foundation for building societies that are more peaceful, open, democratic and economically strong.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.mercycorps.org/profile/profile1.html](http://www.mercycorps.org/profile/profile1.html) (pp.1-2)

- We believe no single agency can meet the challenges of poverty and oppression, so we forge partnerships with other international and local organizations to build a broad coalition for humanitarian action.

(Mercy Corps International 1999)

#### **a. The Mercy Corps Programme in Lebanon**

Mercy Corps has worked in Lebanon since 1993 'to rehabilitate homes and community infrastructure'. At the time of the fieldwork, Mercy Corps had approximately 15 employees, not including consultants. This organisation is currently part of a team of international American based NGOs participating in a USAID funded grant titled 'Reconstruction and Expanded Economic Opportunities in Lebanon.' This programme initiated in October 1997, aims to rehabilitate the economic and social viability of six targeted, geographic clusters of villages in the North and South of Lebanon. Over a four-year period, Mercy Corps will receive \$7.3 million intended for their projects and programmes in more than 49 rural communities.

They state that they have:

Designed and implemented a number of training programs to help vulnerable individuals including rehabilitating damaged infrastructure, and encouraging redevelopment of the agriculture sector by repairing a number of agricultural roads and terraces. In addition, Mercy Corps has helped open access roads between communities of varied religious beliefs, improving communication and trade among the villages and easing the interaction and reconciliation of diverse groups.

In the past year, more than 1,110 families in 12 villages have benefited from our program activities. Activities included irrigation of 247.5 hectares of land, rehabilitation of 11 agricultural roads, construction of a school that now benefits 260 students, and civil society training workshops that benefit more than 335 local non-governmental organizations.<sup>3</sup>

The entire staff of Mercy Corps is Lebanese, though I was told that some employees have dual-nationalities.

## **2. Save the Children Federation**

Save the Children Federation (USA) was founded in 1932 to help Appalachian children in the United States during the Great Depression. The headquarters of the organisation is located in Westport, Connecticut. It began its international work in 1938, in response to an appeal launched for European children displaced by World War II. Today, Save the Children maintains international programs in 42

developing countries, and in 16 states in the United States. They have participated in several countries in the Middle East including, Egypt, the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan and Lebanon.

Most of their funding comes from donations, grants from various sources including the UN, but a substantial portion of their funding has typically come from USAID. For the year 1999, they were able to raise more than \$113 million aimed for operation support and programmes.

During the past 62 years of operation, Save the Children has continuously refined its program strategies to meet the growing needs of children and their families in an increasingly complex world. The underlying principles inherent to all Save the Children's work are: a focus on children and women, participation and empowerment, multi-sectoral integration, sustainability, reaching large numbers of people and evaluation of impact ('making a difference', Save the Children: pamphlet no date given, p. 2).

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<sup>3</sup> [www.mercycorps.org/news/press.middeast.html](http://www.mercycorps.org/news/press.middeast.html) (p. 2) and [www.mercycors.org/programs/lebanon.shtml](http://www.mercycors.org/programs/lebanon.shtml)

Save the Children's Mission statement claims that women and children are the focus of their development work:

As this turbulent century nears an end, many of the world's children face both unparalleled opportunities and intolerable perils. In this uncertain and unsettled environment, Save the children designs and implements programs that meet the most pressing needs of children and those who most often care for them: women. With women and children first, Save the Children continues to activate and support community-based groups to ensure that change will not only be positive, lasting. (ibid, p.3.)

#### **a. The Save the Children Programme in Lebanon**

Save the Children have been working in Lebanon since 1953, and they have been involved in various projects, including public health projects. During the recent civil war they were extremely active in emergency relief, employing some 450 people. In 1992, they changed their focus to working in areas of community development with women and children. Save the Children also initiated a micro loan project for women, which was transferred to a local NGO.

Save the Children works primarily in the following areas:

- 1) Primary education; early childhood development, female literacy programmes, developing educational curricula and training trainers.
- 2) Economic opportunities: social security loans.

3) Developing institutions: gender awareness issues, developing human resources counselling, technical evaluation and social interaction.

Save the Children concentrate their work in the Akkar, the Hermel, and the South. As stated above, at one time during the war, their office employed more than 400 people, who worked in humanitarian relief. Their office has scaled down considerably, though they remain active in the country. The focus of their programmes is primarily helping needy women and children. They run programmes to combat female illiteracy in the rural areas of the Akkar, the Bekaa' and the South, as well as children's camps and training programmes in early childhood development. They have also participated in infrastructural development with UNCHS-Habitat, rebuilding 300 homes in the South.<sup>4</sup>

The staff at Save the Children is approximately 30 men and women, not including consultants, and is made up of a team of experienced and energetic men and women, who are all Lebanese, with the exception of the Mission Officer, who is Canadian.

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<sup>4</sup> Save the Children staff employee, interview, January 1998.

### **3. The Mennonite Central Committee**

MCC was created in 1920 in response to hunger and related human need brought on by war and revolution in Russia and the Ukraine. In 1940 MCC began to grow in response to the Second World War and their desire to help bring about peace. Relief and refugee programmes were set up in Europe at the end of the war. In the 1950s and 1960s MCC programmes expanded in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

At the present time, MCC has more than 900 personnel serving two to three year assignments in around 50 countries, including volunteers and staff in North America. The MCC's North American headquarters are located in Akron, Ohio and Winnipeg, Canada.

The bulk of MCC funding comes from contributions from the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ constituency. Other sources of funding come from earnings from contributions from volunteers, relief sales, MCC shops, SELFHELP crafts, grants from private Canadian government agencies and contributions from Mennonite churches abroad. In 1999, total funding received for MCC was \$69.4 million.

This organisation states that it is motivated by two things: 'The Bible and Mennonite experience' (Lind: no date given, p. 1). MCC believes 'it can best serve by looking for people who have fallen between the cracks of larger programs.' In their Development Monograph Series 1 (Stoesz 1977:7-8), 'Thoughts on Development', MCC answers the question what is development?

People are what development is all about. If it is not for people it is not worthy of the name. People with a liberated spirit are the most essential development ingredient. People are at the same time the objects of the process.

Development is the conscientization process by which people are awakened to opportunities within their reach. Development is people with an increased control over their destiny. Development is freedom, wholeness and justice.

People-oriented development is concerned equally with male and female. The incompleteness of past efforts, which have too often been by men to men, must be corrected. A society cannot be developed by concentrating on one-half of its members. Women and men must both be permitted to benefit and participate directly.

True development begins as an attitude in the hearts and minds of people. People need resources but the key is their own minds and wills. Money and technology produce disappointing results if a development attitude is missing. Where this attitude is present the people will ultimately make progress. The only true measure of development is how it affects people, their attitude and their quality of life.

### **a. The MCC Programme in Lebanon**

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) started working in Lebanon in 1978. They work mainly with rural communities in South Lebanon, especially in the UNIFIL areas. Their budget is quite small \$250,000 annually and they have changed their programme from relief to development. 'Now we don't give 100 per cent donations, we give 50 per cent. The problem is that the mentality of the people has not changed. They are still waiting for handouts. We are facing a lot of difficulties with this change.'<sup>5</sup>

The MCC is working in crop diversification, road building, agriculture, especially tobacco, and summer camps for children. However, their new priorities are:

- 1) Working with Islamic institutions for understanding;
- 2) Working with local churches;
- 3) Working with the marginalised, the handicapped, Palestinians and front line villages (those located on the border of the Israeli occupied territory);
- 4) Peace-making and conflict resolution.

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<sup>5</sup>Bassam Chamoun, MCC, personal communication, July 1998.

The staff at MCC is quite small, with less than 10 employees and nearly all are Lebanese with the exception of the Mission Heads, who are both from North America. They often have volunteers working at their office in Beirut and on field sites. These volunteers are typically from North America.

#### **4. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)**

The World Alliance of YMCA's is a confederation of national Councils of YMCAs around the world. The National Councils are composed of local associations within their countries. The World Alliance was established as early as 1855, at the first International Conference of the YMCA held in Paris. It is said to be the oldest voluntary organisation in the world today.

Their mission statement says the following:

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) is a world-wide Christian ecumenical, voluntary movement for women and men with special emphasis on and the genuine involvement of young people, which seeks to share the Christian ideal of building a human community of justice with love, peace and reconciliation for the fullness of life for all creation. The YMCA is present in 122 countries with 14,000 local associations and 45,000,000 members. The national associations from the World Alliance of YMCA's an international organisation which has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [www.ymca.int/mission/challenge21.htm](http://www.ymca.int/mission/challenge21.htm)

The stated objectives of the YMCA are listed as the Kampala Principles, which were put forth in 1973:

1. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and striving for spiritual, intellectual and physical well-being of individuals and wholeness of communities.
2. Empowering all, especially young people and women to take increased responsibilities and assume leadership at all levels and working towards a equitable society.
3. Advocating for and promoting the rights of women and upholding the rights of children.
4. Fostering dialogue and partnership between people of different faiths and ideologies and recognizing the cultural identities of people promoting cultural renewal.
5. Committing to work in solidarity with the poor, dispossessed, uprooted people and oppressed racial, religious and ethnic minorities.
6. Seeking to be mediators and reconcilers in situations of conflict and working for meaningful participation and advancement of people for their own self-determination.
7. Defending God's creation against all that would destroy it and preserving and protecting the earth's resources for coming generations. To face these challenges, the YMCA will develop patterns of co-operation at all levels that enable self-sustenance and self-determination.<sup>7</sup>

Information concerning YMCA's funding sources or funding amounts are not available, however, considering the size and reach of this organisation, they are sure to be substantial. The YMCA International division headquarters are in Chicago, Illinois. This office oversees the work done in Lebanon, though the Lebanese YMCA typically has substantial autonomy in most of its programmes.

### **a. The YMCA Programme in Lebanon**

The YMCA of Lebanon was established in 1890 as part of the international division linked to the YMCA headquarters in the United States.

The purpose of the YMCA Integrated Rural Development Project is to address identified problems in rural Lebanon, including uneven post-civil war economic recovery, lack of economic opportunities, rural to urban migration, environmental degradation, and disintegrated structures of civic participation in rural areas. In order to adequately address these problems, the YMCA proposes that the USAID method of cluster groups of village communities will work best for the overall goals of development, which they set out to be:

- 1) agriculture infrastructure,
- 2) public works infrastructure,
- 3) health and education infrastructure,
- 4) agricultural income-generation for women,
- 5) community environmental management, and
- 6) civic participation and community education.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.ymca.int/mission/challenge21.htm](http://www.ymca.int/mission/challenge21.htm)

The YMCA (1997:1) claims that:

The overall impact of implementing the integrated set of project activities in each cluster over a three-year period will be a measurable and visible increase in the sustainable socio-economic development and viability of the targeted rural clusters characterized by increased economic opportunities, increased community participation in civic life, and improved basic needs services for community members.

The entire staff at the YMCA is very large with close to 60 employees, and nearly all of them are Lebanese, including the head of the organisation in Lebanon, Ghassan Sayagh, who is called the CEO of the YMCA. They occasionally have foreign volunteers working for them, usually in their office in Sin el Fil.

## **5. The Cooperative Housing Foundation**

The Cooperative Housing Foundation began by building affordable housing in rural and low-income neighbourhoods in America. They were approached by the U.S. Agency for International Aid and Development (USAID) in the 1960s so that CHF could 'apply its models of cooperative housing, microlending, self-help

construction, and community organizational development in Central America'.

These initial projects led them to work in many other countries.<sup>8</sup>

Every CHF housing project promotes self-reliance, democratic principles and private sector involvement.

We root our programs in financially sound approaches which can become self-sustaining without the continuing need for an organization such as CHF. In this sense, we aim to work ourselves out of a job.

The touchstone of CHF's approach is developing local community and institutional capacity to participate effectively within the housing delivery system.

With that basis, CHF's objectives also include economic development, democratic governance, and environmental improvement.

The total amount of funding for the year 1999 was \$157.4 million. They receive(d) funding from a variety of sources, however the bulk comes from USAID, along with various American corporations and other American funding institutions.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.chfhq.org/about1.htm](http://www.chfhq.org/about1.htm)

### **a. The Cooperative Housing Foundation Programme in Lebanon**

Their programme in Lebanon is called: Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

Their stated goal is:

To assist in establishing a vibrant, sustainable economic development program which improves rural families' incomes and makes it possible for displaced families to find and participate in economic opportunities in their home villages.<sup>9</sup>

REDI is a five-year program focusing on six village clusters in North Lebanon and the northern Beka'a Valley: El Hermel North, El Hermel South, El Fakiha, Zgharta South, Wadi Khaled and Beino. CHF states that village clusters were selected because of significant economic need, their limited access to national and international assistance programs, and a strong desire of community residents to improve their economic conditions. Key elements of the REDI include:

- Full participation of community members and leaders, including women, in all aspects of project identification, design and implementation
- Implementation of economic improvement projects in an environmentally sound manner that are responsive to community priorities and provide visible results
- Creation of formal sources of credit for both individuals and community groups and organizations (ibid).

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<sup>9</sup> Lebanon: Rural Economic Development Initiative, (REDI), February 4, 1998.

The staff at CHF includes about 15, not including consultants, and nearly all are Lebanese, including the head of the organisation. CHF routinely has at least one American on staff, typically young college grads, who are trying to get experience following their education. This office is very close to their Washington-based headquarters. The head of CHF in Washington is regularly featured in local newspapers visiting project sites as well as the local CHF office in Beirut.

## **6. Oxfam UK**

In 1942, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief met for the first time. By the 1970s Oxfam became very vocal with their campaign on the behalf of the people it was working with in developing countries. This raised awareness for the plight of the poor and allowed Oxfam to reach decision-makers who shaped policy on relevant issues.

Today Oxfam is said to be the best-known non-governmental organisations in the world. Oxfam UK is an independent British organisation, registered as a charity, and is part of Oxfam International.

The Department for International Development (DFID) (formerly the ODA) is Oxfam's single largest donor, giving over £ 13 million in fiscal year 1996-7.

Oxfam also received funding from the National Lottery Charities Board, the UN, The European Union, and several others, including corporations and trusts.

Oxfam describes itself as an organisation that works for the poor through various mechanisms:

Oxfam GB is a development, relief, and campaigning organisation dedicated to finding lasting solutions to poverty and suffering around the world. We believe that every human being is entitled to a life of dignity and opportunity; and we work with poor communities, local partners, volunteers, and supporters to help this become a reality.<sup>10</sup>

Their stated objectives and beliefs are stated as the following:

1. The lives of all human beings are of equal value.
2. In a world rich in resources, poverty is an injustice which must be overcome.
3. Poverty makes people more vulnerable to conflict and natural calamity; much of this suffering can be prevented, and must be relieved.
4. People's vulnerability to poverty and suffering is increased by unequal power relations based on, for example, gender, race, class, caste and disability; women who make up a majority of the world's poor, are especially disadvantaged.
5. Working together we can build a just and safer world, in which people take control over their own lives and enjoy their basic rights.
6. To overcome poverty and suffering involves changing unjust policies and practices, nationally and internationally, as well as working closely with people in poverty.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [www.oxfam.org.uk/atwork/org1.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/atwork/org1.htm)

<sup>11</sup> [www.oxfam.org.uk/atwork/mission/htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/atwork/mission/htm)

### **a. The Oxfam UK Programme in Lebanon:**

Oxfam's role in Lebanon began in 1982 as an emergency response to the victims of war, working with local NGOs. From 1985 the emphasis moved to development work including health, education, vocational training, early childhood education, disability and income generation.

Oxfam also became involved with advocacy and lobbying, particularly in the field of disability.

Oxfam defined their four focus areas at the end of the war to be:

- disability;
- rural development with marginalised rural communities;
- Palestinian refugees;
- the needs of the urban poor;
- supporting local initiatives which address women and the law, violence and specific categories of vulnerable women (disabled, refugees, displaced women heads of households, rural women and migrant workers);
- continuing our work with Palestinian refugees, particularly their education and health;
- supporting community based initiatives addressing the management of natural resources which are jeopardised by the national reconstruction plan;

- helping to develop the capacity of local organisations, specifically those working on gender, natural resources and emergency preparedness. This will involve the eventual phasing out of funding to existing partner organisations and ensuring that they are able to continue their work independently.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately Oxfam UK's offices in Lebanon closed abruptly in 1999.

## **7. The Pontifical Mission**

The Pontifical Mission is part of the CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association), which is a special agency of the Holy See established in 1926 to support the pastoral mission and institutions of the Catholic churches of the East and to provide humanitarian assistance to the needy and afflicted without regard to race, nationality or religion. They have also been 'entrusted by the Holy Father with responsibility for promoting the union of the Catholic and Orthodox churches.' (CNEWA 1997:2)

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<sup>12</sup> <http://home.netscape.com/escapes/search/ntschrnd-6.html>

Their work in the Middle East includes:

- Preparing church leadership
- Facilitating priestly ministry
- Building church institutions
- Assisting the Holy See
- Responding to urgent human needs
- Rehabilitating dwellings and institutions
- Sustaining a network of human services
- Contributing to education
- Promoting Christian unity
- Fostering inter-religious dialogue
- Raising consciousness about the East
- Supporting educational programs
- Encouraging intercultural communication
- Advocating peace and justice

Information on the history, organisational structure and finance for the Pontifical

Mission are unavailable.

#### **a. The Pontifical Mission Programme in Lebanon**

The Pontifical Mission working with a grant from USAID and MISEREOR completed a three-year rehabilitation programme. They state that they have 'restored 168 villages and rebuilt 1,427 houses, providing housing for 7,137 villagers.' They go on to say that because of their success they were encouraged to apply for an additional USAID grant. They did receive this grant and are

working along with the other four organisations in the USAID Reconstruction and Expanded Economic Opportunities project.

The staff at the Pontifical Mission includes about 35 people and nearly all are Lebanese, including the head of the office in Lebanon.

The next chapter covers a large part of the data obtained from local men and women concerning the level of development in their villages and/or regions. This chapter presents the intended beneficiaries' view of the INGO development programmes and projects with the intention that this information can be used to assist in understanding the current development environment in rural areas of Lebanon.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MEETING NEEDS? INGOs, the STATE and RURAL COMMUNITIES

*Whoever does good work, does good to God.  
Mustapha*

Seen as efficient mechanisms by donors for promoting democratic development, INGOs have become thought of as necessary links between the state, market, local communities and sustainable development. However, their legitimacy rests almost solely on their capability to meet their own stated aims as well as at least part of the needs of the communities that they work with. Moreover the strengths and weaknesses of their capacity are complementary and comparable to the state and market, and should not be viewed separately. Whether these organisations acquire the institutional status to work as viable connections between the state and rural societies depends on their performance and implementation capacity as measured by all stakeholders in the development process, including the intended beneficiaries of their programmes and projects.

This chapter explores the performance of seven INGO programmes in meeting the needs of rural communities in Lebanon. The voices of rural men and

women, who are living in villages where INGOs are working,<sup>1</sup> are utilised in order to gain important insights of the rural political economy; as well as their assessment of the development programmes in their village or area<sup>2</sup>.

As stated in Chapter Two, the development of Lebanon's regions varies dramatically due to a variety of political, historical and socio-economic factors. For this reason it is necessary to examine each region separately in order to grasp the macro-predicament of the particular area under study, before examining the individual programmes in specific villages. The chapter introduces each region and its basic political economy prior to the presentation of particular village data. It is hoped that this will enable the reader to gain a clearer perspective of the obstacles external to the project that development work faces in rural Lebanon.

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<sup>1</sup> I also visited four villages where INGOs were not working.

<sup>2</sup> Please see Appendix, p. 418 for a detailed table of the projects included in this work.

## Administrative Divisions

Lebanon has five governorates (*muḥāfazat*, singular *muḥāfazah*).

⊙ Governorate capital



Map of fieldwork villages<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Map adapted from:

[www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map\\_collection/Atlas\\_middle\\_east/Lebanon\\_divisions.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/Atlas_middle_east/Lebanon_divisions.jpg)

## A. The Akkar

The northernmost region of Lebanon, called the Akkar, is a pristine beautiful expanse of land, with rolling hills and a fertile plain. The main city of this region is Halba. The area is separated from Syria by *Nahr el Kabeer el Janoubi* (The Large Southern River). The coastal strip is known for its immense plantations of vegetables, sugar cane and olives. The interior mountainous regions are rugged and home to impoverished farmers who rely on growing mainly pulses and some deciduous fruit trees. Recent promotion of this area has come about from groups interested in the environment, as the Akkar is home to rare and beautiful flora and fauna. This region is considered by INGO, local NGO and UNDP representatives, among others, to be the most underdeveloped in the country. This is due in part to historical political neglect and the influence of landlords who refused large government development programmes in favour of maintaining their control of the farmer/peasants by providing for them through patron-client relationships. Michael Gilson (1996:14) writing about his fieldwork in the Akkar in 1971-72 explained the relationship of the political elite with the farmers there.

The beys' political control, the relative insulation from the economic and social transformations which had such an effect on central parts of the country from the 1820s onwards, and the absence in the Akkar of those links with France or England that have been so important for the evolution of modern Lebanese history, have combined to reinforce the quasi-isolation of the region.

The lords are happy to do everything they can to preserve this social and cultural backwardness to maintain local domination and their own autonomy from the centre. They have done little to encourage any form of modernization, preferring a population which depends as totally as possible upon their authority. Few dai'a (villages) have schools, clinics, post offices, sewage and drainage, piped water or electricity. The beys see to it by their influence in the National Assembly and the Ministries.

Because this region is relatively isolated it was not directly affected by the civil war (1975-1991). There is a substantial Syrian presence here and comments like the following were heard in every village.

The government has neglected the area so much. No MP's are interested. The MP's from here are our friends, but there is political prostitution in the system. The Akkar is hardly considered part of Lebanon. We are confused. Are we a part of Lebanon or a part of Syria? This does not mean that people are not happy. It's just that the Akkar is just too neglected.<sup>4</sup>

Local mukhtars and INGO representatives estimate the population of the Akkar to be around 300,000. The majority in this region are Sunni Muslim, but a sizeable Christian community also exists. Most of the Christians are from the Greek Orthodox and Maronite sects. Nearly all of the people living in the Akkar are involved in agriculture in some way. The status of agricultural development—as stated previously—in the area is very poor. Of all the regions looked at in this project, the Akkar has witnessed the least in development

assistance, whether from the government or NGOs (local and international). Two local NGOs, the Fares Foundation and the René Moawad Foundation, have ongoing programmes there. The Fares Foundation focuses on medical dispensaries and the Moawad Foundation (at the time of my fieldwork) was working to support local agricultural projects mostly in the Northwest of the region. At the time of my fieldwork, several projects in this region were being carried out by INGOs working with USAID, and most of the work that I looked at in this region was linked to the USAID initiative<sup>5</sup>. As will be discussed below, the village of Bkerzala was an exception, in that it had been used a hub for the distribution of relief aid to areas near Tripoli, which were affected by the war.

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<sup>4</sup>Faysal: single, adult man, painter, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>5</sup>The Reconstruction and Expanded Economic Opportunity programme in Lebanon is the 'flagship' of the USAID program. A critical component of this programme is the Rural Community Development Clusters.

This activity consists of five cooperative agreements to five US NGOs to provide assistance to 30 clusters, consisting presently of 226 rural villages with a total population estimated at over 600,000. Assistance includes basic infrastructure; income producing activities; civic participation; and environmental activities. The NGOs work with local citizen groups, local government and community-based organization. Each NGO is responsible for development of its clusters for the life of the strategy. Community clusters are located in all areas of Lebanon identified by the Higher Relief Committee as poor, or very poor. Three of the clusters, comprising twenty villages, are located inside the Israeli self-declared "security zone".

This programme is a \$60 million five-year(1997-2002) project with an additional \$ 1,000,000 for environmental programmes. Each INGO receives \$one million per year for five years plus a one time instalment of \$one million for the environmental aspect of their programs. The INGOs must spend the funds every year in order to be guaranteed funding for the next year.

I went to the villages of Bkerzala<sup>6</sup>, Bajaa<sup>7</sup>, Ghaitla<sup>8</sup>, Tleil<sup>9</sup>, Hosnie<sup>10</sup>, Ghzaïle<sup>11</sup>, Kraybet el-Hayat<sup>12</sup> (just north of Machta Hassan), Hise<sup>13</sup> and Hneider<sup>14</sup> in Wadi Khaled. Mercy Corps is working in the north-western region of the Akkar in the villages of Bkerzala, Bajaa', Ghaitla and Tleil. The Pontifical Mission is building a school in Kraybet el-Hayat and the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) is working in Wadi Khaled (specifically in the villages of Hise' and Hneider). I also went to two other villages Hosnie and Ghzaïle in the nearby area where INGOs/NGOs were not working.

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<sup>6</sup> In this village I interviewed nine individuals and five men in a group.

<sup>7</sup> I interviewed more than 20 men and women during the first visit and 15 in subsequent visits.

<sup>8</sup> I interviewed nine people from this village.

<sup>9</sup> I interviewed ten people individually from this village, and conducted a group meeting with more than six people.

<sup>10</sup> I interviewed 15-20 people from this village in a group.

<sup>11</sup> I interviewed nearly 30 people from this village in a group.

<sup>12</sup> I made several visits to this village, and in total have spoken to at least 40 people.

<sup>13</sup> I interviewed three people individually and conducted a group interview about 10 people (nine men and one woman).

<sup>14</sup> I made several visits to this village and interviewed at least 30 people.

## 1. The village of Bkerzala

Bkerzala is a fairly large Maronite Christian village with a population of 3,000 persons according to the local mukhtar<sup>15</sup>. The village is located just 15 minutes off the main road by car heading north towards Halba. Bkerzala is no stranger to foreign aid. During the civil war Bkerzala became a hub of sorts for aid distribution. The Pontifical Mission, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Caritas were the most frequently mentioned organisations, and several respondents informed me that the UNDP has recently promised to showcase Bkerzala as a 'model development village.' Currently, the North American based INGO, Mercy Corps with funding from USAID is building a large sewage treatment system here. According to local people, sewage from the village used to collect at the bottom of the road at the entrance to the village.

The majority of people in Bkerzala reported that they work in agriculture at least part of the time, though many hire day labourers to plant and harvest their crops. Most residents said that they have running water through pipes in their

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<sup>15</sup> In Lebanon nearly every village has a mukhtar, or Mayor, who is responsible for maintaining all of the records, and he interfaces with the government in matters of birth, death, marriage and divorce and inheritance for the village. At this time, as was explained in Chapter Two, no official census has been carried out since 1932. Hence, mukhtars are the most reliable source for population data available in Lebanon. Throughout this chapter sources for population will be understood as having come from the village mukhtar, unless noted otherwise.

homes. There is a functioning, recently elected, municipality, a school run by the Maronite order, and the village receives some government electricity. The average per capita monthly income reported for the village is approximately 1,000,000 LL (\$667 or £417)<sup>16</sup>. The majority of people said that their living conditions and quality of life had improved in the past five years, though many remarked that 'life is costing more and our expenses are high.' Many people reported having relatives living abroad, and Australia seemed to be the adopted home for many of the immigrants<sup>17</sup>.

This village is a Christian village, which is situated between Sunni Muslim villages. Many respondents stated that they felt 'surrounded' by 'backward' Muslim villages. It definitely seems that there is an uneasy co-existence in Bkerzala with their neighbours, and many people reported a feeling of superiority and more than a hint of frustration with the 'underdevelopment' of the neighbouring villages.

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<sup>16</sup> This figure was agreed upon by local people and the mukhtar.

<sup>17</sup> At this point it is significant to point out that references to remittances from either relatives living abroad or in major cities was infrequently mentioned. If it was, it was noted that this income was neither regular nor constant, and was considered by most respondents as a bonus and not regular income. For instance, in one village where the locals spoke of remittances from relatives living in Germany, it was mostly for school fees or house repairs and not necessarily a monthly stipend.

We are different than other villages in the Akkar. We are better. We are more advanced. We do have a bad social setting among neighbouring Muslim villages. They have a lower standard. There is just a different ambience. I say it to their faces.<sup>18</sup>

When it comes to reconciliation, no the NGO has not helped. There are clear social differences between them and us. It's difficult.<sup>19</sup>

The respondents said that government interest in their village was low and indicative of the region on the whole.

Low very low. We have no telephones, no good roads, no hospital or infirmaries. As an area the government really neglects it. Look politicians belong to certain areas. The Akkar is forgotten...it is deprived.<sup>20</sup>

The government is not giving importance to the important things. People in the government draw everything towards themselves. Look at the roads that lead to certain villages, they should be repaired, your car can drown in these roads. If there are problems in this village, we solve them ourselves. Each family solves the problems for themselves. Like for instance a water problem we get the money and we do it ourselves.<sup>21</sup>

I was taken to this village by Alia Shaban, the gender co-ordinator for Mercy Corps and UNIFEM, and she introduced me to Nadim Ibrahim, who historically has been the main connection with the aid agencies for the village. His position has changed somewhat as USAID requires that the INGOs set up a committee, and then following the municipal election the INGO must work with the municipality. The case of Nadim Ibrahim is important because he and others

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<sup>18</sup>Jean: married, middle-aged man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>19</sup>Mr. Obeid: married, elderly man, retired civil servant, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>20</sup>Mr. Obeid: same as above.

<sup>21</sup>Noura: married, adult woman, housewife, individual interview, 1998.

spoke about how his position in the village had changed since his contact with NGOs. He was living in a large house that had originally been the depot for all of the 'development aid' and he was then able to turn it into his house and build on to it. He spoke of how he was able to get \$5,000 from one aid agency that he was working with in order to repair the irrigation network for his orchards. He believes that his success in 'development' lies with his ability to write proposals and 'speak development language.' This he says is why he 'was able to bring so much development to the village'.<sup>22</sup>

When I told him that I would be interviewing some of the villagers concerning the work of Mercy Corps, he objected saying 'Why speak to the villagers when you can speak to me?'<sup>23</sup>

Overall, the villagers were pleased with the project:

I have heard from other people and I know from Mercy Corp's current project. They are very concerned and active. No one could have dreamt this could happen here especially the older people who couldn't even water their orchards before Mercy Corps came!<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Nadim Ibrahim: married, middle-aged man, NGO village liaison, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>23</sup>Nadim Ibrahim: same as above

<sup>24</sup>Suraya: single, adult woman, NGO worker and local committee member, individual interview, 1998.

It doesn't matter who does the work as long as it is beneficial. When Mercy Corps came we had not heard of them—they took us individually as people and this is all that matters. What matters is that they came.<sup>25</sup>

One woman voiced her concerns about the surrounding villages' lack of sewage system and its effect on her village.

Yes. It is very important not only to get rid of the sewage but I want everyone else's sewage away from me. There should be a solution because here we have olives and a lot of vegetable production, so there should be a global solution for the other's (villages) sewage as well. I wonder how they will make sure that the sewage goes to the treatment. How? There are no connections from our house to the project.<sup>26</sup>

Many of the people in Bkerzala complained that the village above them, Bajaa', was terminally 'backward' and 'undeveloped', and in desperate need of development agencies, so this was the next village that I visited in my fieldwork.

## 2. The village of Bajaa'

The small Sunni village of Bajaa' with a population of 350, according to the local mukhtar, is located about 20 minutes east of Bkerzala by car, up winding roads and is perched at the top of a steep hill. A long time development field worker, who had worked in Bajaa' several years before described the village as '...one of the poorest villages I have ever visited.'<sup>27</sup> Today poverty is still evident and

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<sup>25</sup>George: married, adult man, farmer and local committee member, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>26</sup>Noura: married, adult woman housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>27</sup>Haytham Annan: adult man, long-time development field officer, 1998.

widespread, though there is some construction going on and most of the people that I spoke to believed that their housing and living conditions have improved in the last five years. Like Bkerzala, there were many reports of relatives emigrating to foreign destinations (Australia), and migrating to larger cities; Beirut and Tripoli. Government involvement in this village appears totally absent, and the most common answer to questions regarding the government was: 'The government...do they even know that we exist?'<sup>28</sup>

The majority of women work in subsistence agriculture<sup>29</sup> and the men either work as manual labourers in Bkerzala or as farmers. The average income for the village was reported by the local and the mukhtar to be 250,000 LL (\$167 or £104) per month per family. When speaking about the reasons for the improvement of living conditions in the village, the locals listed several contributing factors, but many referred to emigration to a foreign destination and migration to Beirut and Tripoli, and the concomitant flow of remittances sent back to the village as the main source of 'development'.

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<sup>28</sup>Ali: married, adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Subsistence agriculture in this context is meant to mean food that is grown and consumed by the family, and is not sold.

Mercy Corps is currently working here; they built a concrete road leading up to the village and a water pool reservoir.<sup>30</sup> Before the water reservoir was built, the village women had to walk one kilometre to a spring and carry water back to the village. Now, they all have access to this water source and most use it for household purposes and irrigation. However, because other villages in the mountainous region above them do not have sewage treatment<sup>31</sup>, Bajaá's water sources are polluted in the winter by sewage washing down from higher villages. It was reported that some people have continued to drink this unpotable water and illnesses due to contamination were commonly reported, many village women have continued to collect water from the spring for drinking during the winter months.

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<sup>30</sup>Save the Children also built a water holding tank there several years ago.

<sup>31</sup> Please note that when I state that there is no sewage treatment that means that sewage is disposed of locally in cesspits.



Mercy Corp's water reservoir in Bajaa'

The other project that Mercy Corps was supposed to carry out in the village was the construction of an all weather school for about 70 children in the area, who for the most part do not have access to any formal education, due to a lack of facilities.<sup>32</sup>

We proposed the school project to the Mercy Corps because they had done a reservoir here previously. The locals offered the land 1000 square metres, but Mercy Corps denied us the request because they said that the land is not straight. They want flat land. As you can see this village is at the top of a hill. The flat land we have is all used for farming and we cannot spare it. Everyone knows that the land can be straightened with a bulldozer in two days, but they refuse.<sup>33</sup>

I returned to the village in April 1999 and the original land offered by the villagers had been cleared and flattened by the owner of the land himself. They

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<sup>32</sup>Residents reported a minimum 75 % illiteracy rate in this village, 1998.

<sup>33</sup>Ali and Mohammed: married, adult men, farmers, group interview, 1998.

were waiting for Mercy Corps to begin work on the school and had been told by the current field officer in charge that Mercy Corps was waiting for their new budget. The following week I visited Mercy Corps to inquire as to the status of the school and was told by Hiam Shedid, the acting head of Mercy Corps, that the villagers had not agreed on the land. I told her that I had just come from there and that the land had been offered and cleared, and that they were waiting for the budgeting process to be completed. She told me that the villagers were lying and that they had changed their minds concerning the project. I repeated that I had just come from Bajaa' and that they seemed more than co-operative. She said that she was going there in a week and angrily added, '...if things can't be worked out, this project will be deleted by Mercy Corps! *khalas!* (that's it!)'<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Hiam Shedid: adult woman, acting head of Mercy Corps International, individual interview, 1999.



A typical day for Bajaa's children

### 3. The villages of Tleil and Ghaitla

The villages of Tleil and Ghaitla are about 30 minutes by car north of Bkerzala just off the main road after Halba, and are situated very close together. Mercy Corps built an all weatherised school in Tleil for use by both villages and constructed roads in Ghaitla. The previous school was a dilapidated one-room building that was in a sorry state, devoid of toilets or a heating system.

The villages are mixed Alawite, Sunni Muslim and Greek Orthodox. The population of Tleil is estimated by local people and the mukhtar to be 3,000 persons with 1,800 residents and Ghaitla has about 700 inhabitants. Most of the villagers work in agriculture and many families have at least one male relative in the army. Many villagers also reported that smuggling goods to Syria (as this

village is very near the northern Lebanese/Syrian border) was a very lucrative trade up until about two years ago (1996) when the Syrian and Lebanese governments began to crackdown on this type of illicit trade. The villagers pointed to elaborate red roofed villas built outside the village as those belonging to the 'most successful smugglers.'

Unlike Bkerzala, the villagers spoke of very harmonious relations and peaceful co-existence between sects. They said that the 'war in Beirut' had not affected relations here and that this tolerance was reflected in the management and implementation of the project.

The committee members were chosen by compromise between villagers, families, teachers and the municipality.<sup>35</sup>

We have no differences in this village. We all work with one hand together and it all goes back to the village. All of us men, women and children.<sup>36</sup>

I only met with the municipality members in Tleil, as Ghaitla has no municipality. Here I found that state involvement in this village was no different than anywhere else in the Akkar.

Here we don't feel the presence of the government It is non-existent.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Fares: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>36</sup>Hind: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>37</sup>Ilyas: widowed, elderly man, retired farmer and civil servant, 1998.

We know about everyone else in the country but they don't know about us. Our whole village depends on agriculture production to survive. This year's production was really poor because of the rats. If the government really cared about us, they would help us, but they don't even want to know that we exist, what can they gain from us?<sup>38</sup>

No one cares about us. If we have problems here...even with the roads, we solve it ourselves within the family or within the village. We solve things for ourselves.

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The men and women of both villages were very pleased with the work of Mercy Corps:

Everyone here is happy with the project. Did you know that even the American Ambassador came to look at the project and to see our village? He made us feel that yes, we are on the map of Lebanon, and someone knows that we exist. We felt very good. Our own government never did anything for us. They don't even know that we exist until election time. Then they come here with smiles and promises and we never see them again or the fruits of their promises.<sup>40</sup>

This organisation has a very good reputation in this village. We hope that they don't leave. We are hoping for more projects here.<sup>41</sup>



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<sup>38</sup>Hind: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>39</sup>Fouad: adult male, 1998.

<sup>40</sup>Hind: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>41</sup>Samia: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, individual interview, 1998.

## Future school in Tleil built by Mercy Corps

Though the structural problems of the school had been solved by building a new one, many spoke of the low level of qualified teachers in the village, and those who could afford private school tuition fees were not going to send their children to the new school.

I do have access to the school, but I will not be sending my children there. *Why?* My children go to a private school because up until now this school was barely functioning. I mean there were no toilets for the children or the teachers! Even now I won't send my children there because the teachers are not that qualified.<sup>42</sup>

There are 55 students from here in elementary school. The impact of the school is quite positive. Instead of sending my children to Halba they can go here.<sup>43</sup>

After Tleil they have to go to Halba if they continue. This school is only elementary. But with the school in Tleil the problem is that the level is really bad.<sup>44</sup>

Women in the village complained that they needed something for them.

They wanted a factory to open a branch here, so that they could supplement their income and achieve some personal growth. Women admitted that they were involved with this project, mostly because the field officer from Mercy Corps had made a point of involving them.

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<sup>42</sup>Hind: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>43</sup>Hassan: middle-aged man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>44</sup>Moussa: middle-aged man, shop owner, group interview, 1998.

I think that men and women were equally involved in this programme so far. All of the women in our community are taking part in this because we know and understand what's going on.<sup>45</sup>

It must be noted that Mercy Corps' field officer, Jacqueline Moukeiber seems to have really made a difference. Men, women and even children from the villages where she was working, knew her personally. She spent a lot of time getting to know the locals and this seems to have given them a feeling of security and trust. Unfortunately, Jacqueline left the organisation just two months after I completed my fieldwork and she was openly criticised by her superiors at Mercy Corps for 'spending too much time talking to communities and women and not enough time on infrastructure.'<sup>46</sup> The drive to construct and move on to the next project is high with USAID funding, as the time limits are strict and short. If an organisation doesn't spend all of their yearly allotment, then they don't get the same amount of funding the following year.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Hind: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>46</sup>Hiam Shedid: adult woman, acting head of Mercy Corps International, individual interview, 1999.

<sup>47</sup> According to a local consultant Alia Shabaan was also let go from Mercy Corps for the same reason: spending too much time with women and local people, 1999.

#### 4. The villages of Hosnie and Ghzaïle

Hosnie is a very impoverished Sunni Muslim village that one must pass through to get to Bkerzala, and is about 10 minutes by car from Bkerzala. The men and women here are mostly day labourers on large agricultural estates. Most people reported their income on a daily basis and it was on average 4,000 LL (\$2.67 or £1.67) per day for the summer months only (from the beginning of May until the end of September)<sup>48</sup>. There is no sewage system or running water in the village, and housing and living conditions were reported to be worsening<sup>49</sup>. According to local people no development organisations had ever approached Hosnie.

The village had an election, however, groups belonging to different clans began fighting and the municipality was cancelled. When I asked a group of about six women why they thought INGOs did not approach their village, some of the women replied:

Oh...we are too poor. Yes, they would never work here, because we don't even have the basics. Anyway, we can not get organised here, we need someone from the village to represent us, and there is no one.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The average yearly income is 720,000 LL (\$480 or £300).

<sup>49</sup> Most families have access to cess-pits for sewage.

<sup>50</sup> Fatoum and Um Ali: married, adult women, farmers and housewives, group interview, 1998.

The other village I visited in this area that was not part of an INGO scheme was Ghzaïle, which was a small Sunni village with about 300 inhabitants.<sup>51</sup> Each house had its own personal well, but there was no sewage system<sup>52</sup>. The villagers bought their own generator in order to electrify the village. However recently the government has supplied the village with electricity.

Even as far as electricity goes, the villagers here bought their own generator and established an electricity network. And when the government had their emergency electricity plan, they came to this village, not because of a will to do so, but because they had to cover all of Lebanon and anyway because the Italians made them, the project I think was sponsored by the Italians. <sup>53</sup>

The economic situation preoccupied everyone we spoke with. The average income was about 300,000 LL (\$200 or £125) per month per family, according to locals and the mukhtar. One man who worked as a painter professed that, 'The political system is unstable. There is great uncertainty, and 200,000 LL (\$133 or

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<sup>51</sup>Unlike any other village I visited in my fieldwork, there was no welcome from the people. We sat in the *saahah* or the centre of the village with about 20 men and women. The reception was very frosty and no one spoke. Then when we explained the project and why we were there, relations changed instantly. Out came the tea and fruits and people started speaking animatedly. The reason for this initial standoffish reception was because the villagers explained that they had had several visits from Jehovah's Witnesses and they thought that we were there to convert them.

<sup>52</sup> Most families have access to cess-pits for sewage.

<sup>53</sup>Faysal: single, adult man, painter, individual interview, 1998.

£83) a month is all that sustained me two years ago, now this year, it is not enough!’<sup>54</sup>

The villagers were not aware of any NGOs or INGOs working in the area, though they mentioned names like Issam Fares for providing scholarships and medical care to people in the Akkar<sup>55</sup>. They, like the men and women in Hosnie, did not expect that any INGOs would approach their village, because they argued that they were too poor and did not have any *wasta*.<sup>56</sup>

#### 5. The village of Kraybet el-Hayat

About one hour’s drive to the north-east of Halba just after Machta Hassan and Machta Hammoud is the village of Kraybet el-Hayat. This is a Sunni Muslim village with about 450 inhabitants, according to locals and the INGO representative. Many of the villagers in Kraybet el-Hayat are subsistence farmers and day labourers, earning just 4,000 LL daily for the summer only,<sup>57</sup> and most stated that they do not own their own land. Many spoke of working on land owned by a wealthy landlord from Machta Hammoud. According to my

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<sup>54</sup>Faysal: single, adult man, painter, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>55</sup> Issam Fares is a Lebanese multi-millionaire who is originally from the Akkar. Through his foundation, the Fares Foundation, he donates food, money and medicine to the people of the Akkar. His foundation also works to promote his political platform.

interviewees, the average monthly income for the villagers not working as day labourers is 300,000 LL (\$200 or £125) per month for a family of approximately ten persons, including the elderly. The living and housing conditions have reportedly declined steadily in the last five years.

In this village we don't have a school, sewage treatment, roads or potable water. This village lacks a lot, and basically we have nothing.<sup>58</sup>

We leave it up to God! Everything is deteriorating. There is no work.<sup>59</sup>

In Beirut, no matter what I do I make 10 papers (10,000 LL). Here we live like nothing!<sup>60</sup>

We need a sewage system, roads, and a hospital. When a person gets sick here he has to go to Syria. This is what is happening in all the border areas. The nearest hospital in Lebanon is in Halba, one hour away. There is a clinic in Qobayat. In Syria we pay for medical care, but it is symbolic compared to here: \$100 in Lebanon \$20 in Syria. If we go to the public hospitals in Syria it's free.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Wasta is a term in Lebanese Arabic that means 'a power-broker'.

<sup>57</sup> The average yearly income is 720,000 LL (\$480 or £300)

<sup>58</sup> Um Ahmed: married adult woman, farmer and housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>59</sup> Abdel Karim: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>60</sup> Ahmed K.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>61</sup> Mustapha: married, middle-aged man, store owner, individual interview, 1998.

The Pontifical Mission is trying to finish building a school here that the villagers started constructing themselves about seven or eight years ago.

We gathered money from the villagers (40,000LL to 80,000LL) to build this school ourselves and then we started to build it. Well the *darak* (Gendarmerie from Machta Hassan) came and said that we didn't have permit to build this school, even though it was on our own land and then they came and tore down the work that we had started. We couldn't collect enough money for the permit, so we just stopped the school. You see if you look into this storage house you will see all of the wasted cement. It's all lost! Wasted!<sup>62</sup>

Two years ago one of the village notables who had been a candidate for MP heard that an organisation, Pontifical Mission, was doing development work in the area. He approached them to see if they would agree to build the school, and they agreed conditionally until approval from USAID was secured. They also agreed to construct an irrigation canal and pave a small road. In August 1998, seven months later the canal was completed, however USAID had still not granted permission for the school. Finally in the early spring of 1999 USAID gave approval and the Pontifical Mission went to work. They had completed the foundation and were just beginning the walls when the work was halted by the *darrak* (local police) claiming that they still needed the permit.

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<sup>62</sup>Ahmed: married, adult man, mini bus driver, individual interview, 1998.



Current one-room school in Kraybet el-Hayat



Future school in Kraybet el-Hayat: Construction work frozen

The last time I visited this village was in late April 1999, and all work on the school had ceased. The locals explained that the Pontifical Mission was trying to sort things out, but that this was basically an issue of local power politics. It seems that the head constable felt that the villagers should have officially asked permission from him before they began work on the school. They

also said that he expected some form of payment, both monetary and patronage. The villagers refused because they reasoned that this was their own land and they were building this primary school, because they believed that the government would never build one in their village. This village has no members in the military or the government. They have no patron and no *wasta*; therefore they are at the mercy of this local constable. He knows that they have no connections, which give him a significant amount of power over them, and they have no recourse to the government because in this area, he is the government. It is important to note that these constables are rotated, which means that he has a relatively short time to maximise his power structure and financial gain. Also, head constables are non-commissioned officers who have been serving for about 25 to 30 years and are close to retirement, therefore the pressure for some to collect is substantial.

Whilst in the village I met with a group of local men who were working with the Pontifical Mission. They laughed when I spoke about the committee and they said 'our village is a committee'. Like the majority of villages that I went to in Lebanon, the locals generally handle problems or development issues themselves and decisions are taken together. There is no municipality though

many said that they would like to have one, and two men reported that they were interested in running for municipal elections. When I asked them if there were women on the committee, one elderly man responded. 'Yes! There is one, and already that is too many!'<sup>63</sup> All of the men laughed, but one man explained that in a way women are involved because 'sometimes the husband will discuss these things with his wife.'<sup>64</sup> This was not viewed by some women as fair, because a few did want to be directly involved and felt that they had been ignored.

I was not engaged in any part of the project, because all of this happened between men and there was no part for the women. But, I would have liked to have been a part of it and I would have liked to have been able to have given at least my opinion concerning this project.<sup>65</sup>

Most of the men in the village responded with disbelief that women would even want to be involved.

Women? No there are no women, only men are involved with this project, women? Do they want women? Women have no interest in these kinds of things.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Mustapha D.: married, adult man, truck driver, committee member, group interview, 1998.

<sup>64</sup>Mohammed: adult man, farmer and construction worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>65</sup>Fatima speaks: married woman, housewife, group interview: group agrees, 1998.

<sup>66</sup>Ahmed: married, adult man, mini bus driver, individual interview, 1998.

The level of government development here is non-existent. The response that 'this village is self-made!' was common. There was a complete lack of trust in the government, and many felt that the government was against them.

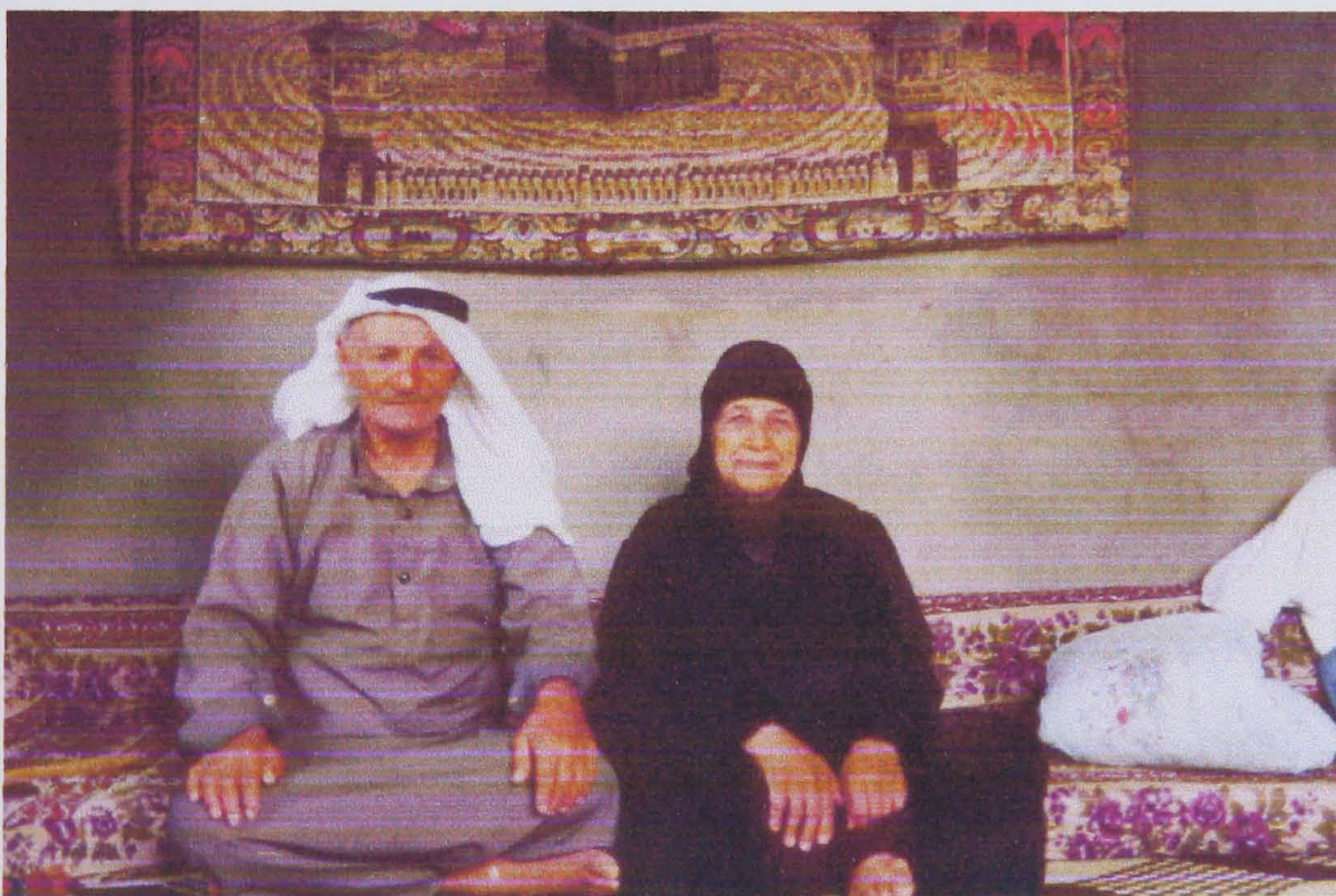
There is no government involvement in this village. This area is dead forgotten!<sup>67</sup>

You never see a government official here in this village unless it is election time.<sup>68</sup>

There is a lack of trust in confidence in the government, that is why everyone works on his own. There is a lack of trust.<sup>69</sup>

In all of the government ministries and with all of the ministers, there is no trust.<sup>70</sup>

There's no municipality, we must resort to MP's and it's not easy to reach MP's. MP's when they want something, they are always around, but if there is work to be done, they will leave and you will not be able to see them.<sup>71</sup>



Elderly couple in Kraybet el-Hayat

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<sup>67</sup>Ahmed K.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>68</sup>Um Mohammed: married, adult housewife and farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>69</sup>Abdullah: adult man, construction worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>70</sup>Mustapha: married, middle-aged man, store owner, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>71</sup>Fatima: married woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

## 6. The area of Wadi Khaled

Wadi Khaled lies to the north-east of Kraybet el-Hayat and one must pass through a Syrian checkpoint in order to reach the area. Wadi Khaled is a beautiful area. It has small forests, green rocky plains and ancient rock formations everywhere. The land gets progressively more rocky as one travels east. In Hneider there are large dark coloured boulders covering the land. Many locals have used these rocks to build houses and separation walls.

According to local estimates and the INGO field officer working in the area, there are about 40,000 people living in Wadi Khaled and finally in 1993 they were officially recognised as Lebanese citizens. Historically, they were nomadic tribes, but settled in this area about a century ago. There were a lot of stories going around the development community as to why they did not get citizenship before 1993. However, the story that the villagers tell is plausible and was confirmed by an AUB historian. In the past, the Ottomans would journey to the poorest areas and force young men into their armies. Upon receiving news that the Ottoman authorities were coming, the tribes of Wadi Khaled would leave the area and hide in the nearby forests. When the French authorities attempted to register the people of this area in the early 1920's, the people did not trust this

registration and understood it as an action to deny them their freedom and again they hid. Years passed and successive Lebanese governments avoided registering the inhabitants of Wadi Khaled, possibly due to the fact that they are Sunni Muslim and would have increased the percentage of that sect slightly.

According to local people and CHF representatives this area is extremely impoverished<sup>72</sup>. Most of the population are farmers, however smuggling to and from Syria was a very lucrative business until about two years ago (1996). Many spoke of the loss of smuggling as a vital part of the economy, and a death knell for the area. Moreover, the Lebanese government has put strenuous conditions on their citizenship, and they are forbidden from collecting any wages for ten years.

#### 7. The villages of Hise' and Hneider

Hise' and Hneider are both villages that I visited in Wadi Khaled. The area's economy is dependent on agriculture and the average family income was reported by locals and a few mukhtars to be 200,000 LL (\$133 or £83) per month, but reports of 1,000,000 LL (\$667 or £416) per year were common,

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<sup>72</sup> The local interviewees and the CHF representatives made no mention of labour remittances contributing to the local economy.

especially in Hneider<sup>73</sup>. The average family size, according to a local mukhtar, was ten, including the elderly. Lack of agricultural attention and extension from the government was a source of great frustration.

It was in Hise' that I met with the committee, which was working with the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF). CHF was currently constructing an irrigation canal, had finished an agriculture road in Hneider and were helping to refurbish a government school in Hise'. During the committee focus group one of the members told me that, 'CHF is working for people and is making the citizen participate with labour or finance to make him value the work.'<sup>74</sup> 'CHF presents the material and the people will work with it and then when they see what they have worked so hard to accomplish, they will preserve it.'<sup>75</sup> This is not the only place that I heard these declarations. This was what I was told by the mission head, Ayman Abdullah, all of his employees, the Lebanese media whenever they covered a CHF 'development success', and the CHF homepage on the Internet. It should also be stated here that CHF is the only INGO in this project that calls local people 'clients' and they do this purposely.

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<sup>73</sup> These figures come from the local mukhtar, local interviewees and the INGO representatives.

<sup>74</sup> Aziz: married, adult man, teacher and village committee member, group interview, 1998.

<sup>75</sup> Amsha: single, adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.



Men at work on a CHF site in Wadi Khaled

It came out in the committee interview that the area was certainly very deprived and little in the way of development by the state had ever been attempted here. Again, it was clear that the villagers of Wadi Khaled, like other rural areas of Lebanon relied on each other and their families for nearly all of the village development.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>I was not given permission to conduct any formal interviews in Hise' or Hneider on the first day. The CHF representative and the head of the committee, the sheik in the region preferred that we not interview the local people. I insisted saying that I had to interview at least some people, especially women since there were no women on the committee. So, the sheik's niece was asked to accompany us and I only conducted one interview in Hise with a woman who owned a small clothing shop just off the main road. However, I returned to the area three times and have interviewed many people.

Look we built and paved the main roads ourselves. The government didn't do it, we did. We don't even have a network for electricity, we manage it ourselves.<sup>77</sup>

If anything goes wrong here, we handle it ourselves. The government does not want to know about us.<sup>78</sup>

Many local people also complained about their lack of rights as citizens due to the restrictions that had been placed on their newly acquired citizenship. There is a law in place that prohibits them from earning wages from the government for ten years and this, they claimed, was a significant cause of their deprivation.

We have no rights! My cousin just finished law school, but he can't practice law. Ah..but we have to do our military service!<sup>79</sup>

The CHF representative for the area shouted, 'You waited for 60 years now wait 10 more years!'<sup>80</sup> Many villagers expressed displeasure with the work of CHF. Some people in Hise' said that the INGO was taking credit for building the school, when in fact the villagers had built the school themselves eight years ago. 'All they did was add a bathroom and put tiles of the roof, they didn't build the

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<sup>77</sup>Haj: married, elderly man, mukhtar and village committee member, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>78</sup>Jamal: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>79</sup>Abdel: single, young adult man, student and part-time farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>80</sup>Mohammed Al-Assad: CHF area representative, 1998.

school!’<sup>81</sup> Most felt that they had not been asked or consulted about the projects. They did appreciate the help, but they felt that they had been cheated. Many mentioned that an American official had visited the area, and the villagers said that they felt powerless to speak to him, since Mohammed, the man who ‘owns the village’, never left his side.

Interestingly, most people in the villages had never heard of CHF, but when I mentioned the name of the CHF representative, Mohammed Al-Assad, everyone knew. It turns out that he is not only a native of this area, but he is also its largest landowner.

Mohammed Al-Assad brings all of the projects here.<sup>82</sup>

We were never asked what we wanted or needed. We need a school more than a road. It comes from Mohammed Al-Assad, he brings all of the development projects here.<sup>83</sup>

Mohammed ‘Kheir’ Al-Assad got the project himself from the organisation. They have the money.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Mohammed M.: married, adult man, construction worker, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>82</sup>Ali: married, adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>83</sup>M.K./Hneider: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>84</sup>Khaloud: single, young adult woman, student and part-time farmer, group interview, 1998.

He said that, ...the road was needed, but when it rains it will be gone, just like the roads that CRS<sup>85</sup> did a few years ago. No one can use them now. They are useless. Mohammed worked for them too. He brings all of the projects here, we can't go out and get them.<sup>86</sup>

We spoke about the committee that was formed for the agriculture road, but it turned out that the committee had more to do with accounting than co-ordination.

Yes there is a committee—well it was just for the road. CHF came and said that we had to have a committee so that no one would have a question about the accounting of the project. There were four people on the committee.<sup>87</sup>

Yes I did work on the committee, but it was only to make sure that the hours of labour were correct, and they were correct.<sup>88</sup>

We were never asked what we as people wanted for our area. No. Mohammed decided a road, then we get a road. Mohammed owns 70% of all of this area. He's the largest landowner here. <sup>89</sup>

When it comes to using the road, everyone has access. We all can use it, but it is rocky and when it rains, the road will be gone because there is no pavement.<sup>90</sup>

The plan was one thing, but the actual project was another -- it didn't turn out as good as I thought it would.<sup>91</sup>

We can't tell anyone!<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Mohammad also worked with CRS and Ayman Abdullah, the man who runs CHF used to run CRS.

<sup>86</sup>Um Mohammed K./Hneider: married, adult woman, housewife and farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>87</sup>Yahyah: married, adult man, farmer and construction worker, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>88</sup>Haj: married, elderly man, mukhtar and village committee member, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>89</sup>A. M.: married, adult man, driver, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>90</sup>Abdel Aziz: married, adult man, farmer and driver, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>91</sup>Um Amr: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>92</sup>Amr: married, adult man, construction worker, group interview, 1998.



CHF's agricultural road in Hneider

There is no school in the village of Hneider, which is about 10 to 15 minutes drive east of Hise'. The tuition rate at the nearest school is 200,000LL per child, which is near, or more than most earn per month. Most of the families have five children, so this cost is prohibitive<sup>93</sup>. They typically send one child to school, and usually it is the eldest. They said that they could send their children for free in Syria, but they can't afford the monthly transportation bill to get them there<sup>94</sup>. This was a source of immense frustration for the villagers. Apart from their severe economic dilemmas, not being able to send their children to school was a cause of great distress and shame. They said that they had approached

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<sup>93</sup> Statistics for family size comes from the local mukhtar and interviewees.

<sup>94</sup> Generally throughout the Akkar, transportation via privately owned mini buses to school is 25,000 LL per child per month, however in other places, it was said to be as high as 100,000LL per child per month.

CHF through their local representative, Mohammed (Kheir) Al-Assad to ascertain if CHF would help them construct a school.

We wanted to do the school project instead of the road, because we need the school more and we are willing to contribute. Someone approached the CHF (Mohammed Assad) but he rejected it.<sup>95</sup>

*Do you know why?*

Well, I don't know they say that it is the government's duty.<sup>96</sup>

We told him that other organisations are building schools and why doesn't he ask CHF again.<sup>97</sup>

I am sure that they will tell us that it is the government's duty. Why should Mohammed Assad build us a school?<sup>98</sup>

Whatever this organisation does, they can't compete with the government.<sup>99</sup>

Anyway like other things, you need a lot of *wasta* to get things done with the organisation or anyone else. (everyone agrees)<sup>100</sup>

Many spoke about the one way trade from Syria to Lebanon now that both of the governments have stopped smuggling. Smuggling was an integral part of life and an important source of income for the entire area of Wadi Khaled and all border towns.

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<sup>95</sup>Amr: married, adult man, construction worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>96</sup>Amr: married, adult man, construction worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>97</sup>Kassem: ault man, farmer and construction worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>98</sup>Amr: married, adult man, construction worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>99</sup>Aisha: married, adult woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>100</sup>Amr: married, adult man, construction worker, group interview, 1998.

Before the war, we used to bring products from Lebanon and sell them in Syria. In a way our village was open. Both men and women worked together! Then we didn't have the Lebanese nationality. But now, since the end of the events (war) finished, things have gone worse for us, especially for those who have no education.<sup>101</sup>

The villagers rely heavily on Syria for survival. In many cases, it was reported that if there was no access to Syria's inexpensive food and hospitals many of the people in these rural border areas would starve.

Look if we weren't close to Syria it would have been a disaster!  
Here 5 kg of salt is 5,000 LL while in Syria 10 kg of salt is 100 Syrian Lira (2,000 LL, \$ 1.33 or £.83).<sup>102</sup>

Syria helps us 100% in living.<sup>103</sup>

We even check our health in Syria for 350 Syrian Lira (around 7,000LL, \$ 5 or £ 3)<sup>104</sup>

They don't ask us where we are coming from, because Syria knows our poor condition.<sup>105</sup>

In Syria on 5,000 Syrian Lira (100,000 LL, \$ 67 or £42) the best family can live. The government there sets the prices and makes sure that all have something. Not like here.<sup>106</sup>

Even here we live 99% from Syria and 1% from Lebanon. Not because we want to, but because we are forced. If it weren't for Syria we wouldn't live. We buy almost everything there and we even go to the doctor there.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>Kabeer: married, adult woman, shop owner, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>102</sup>Kabeer: single, young adult woman, group interview, 1998.

<sup>103</sup>Amsha: single, young adult woman, group interview, 1998.

<sup>104</sup>Um Amr: married, adult woman, farmer and housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>105</sup>Khoulout: single, young adult woman, student, group interview, 1998.

<sup>106</sup>Aisha: married, adult woman, group interview, 1998.

<sup>107</sup>Um Ali: married, adult woman, housewife and farmer, group interview, 1998.

We show our Lebanese ID's and they treat us like Syrians. They treat us as equals.<sup>108</sup>

Our government doesn't care about us at all. We simply don't exist to them. Do you think Berri and Hariri worry that Haj and I can't buy a bag of sugar for our families? Ha!<sup>109</sup>

Women in the area expressed frustration because they felt that they were not included in the development projects. Women in all of the rural areas pleaded for help from INGOs, the government or anyone who would listen. They desperately want to learn new skills, so that they can contribute financially to the household income, and gain some security for themselves.

There should be something done for women here. They are in bad shape. It used to be that a girl would only go to school until the 5th grade elementary, now they stay longer, and can try to guarantee some kind of future. The ones who don't stay are in trouble. They should do something, even a sewing factory, so that she can secure her future. For example, if she becomes a widow or her husband leaves her. Now, even the man can't secure the family alone.<sup>110</sup>

The young men in these organisations, even ones coming from Beirut, they don't convey their messages very well. We don't know what's going on. We don't know what is available to us.<sup>111</sup>

Until now, no we women have not been spoken to or asked about anything. Maybe they are not interested in involving women in these projects.<sup>112</sup>

No. No. Women are not a part of these projects. These are male projects.<sup>113</sup>  
When I asked Mohammed Al-Assad about the inclusion of women in CHF projects, he said that:

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<sup>108</sup>Haj: married, adult man, construction worker, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>109</sup>Yahyah: married, adult man, shop owner, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>110</sup>Kabeer: married, adult woman, shop owner, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>111</sup>Aisha: married, adult woman, group interview, 1998.

<sup>112</sup>Um Mohammad: married, adult woman, housewife and farmer, individual interview, 1998.

CHF really cares about the needs of women and women are our major target. Sometimes we even go around and ask women what they need and on an individual level the women are able to say what they want. However, this organisation CHF is involved in collective projects and this is where the woman's ideas are not that mature.

In all cases more than 55% of women benefit from the ongoing projects, because women either have their husbands in agriculture or even if they are not married, they still might work in agriculture. But if we want to do tailoring courses or embroidery, the market is very competitive, and we are incompetent, because the Syrian market is a great competitor. Even if they want to buy wool, ready to wear shirts are much cheaper in Syria than buying the raw materials to make them. So that's why great factories have closed in Lebanon.<sup>114</sup>

Women are invariably linked with tailoring, canning and carpet making everywhere. Many women expressed that they would like to learn new farming or household management techniques. It seems that INGOs are hesitant to initiate programs for women that are not linked directly to the market. In the end many INGOs reason that if the women cannot produce something that they can sell, then there is little or no benefit in sponsoring projects.

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<sup>113</sup>Um Ali: married, adult woman, housewife and farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>114</sup>Mohammad Al-Assad; CHF area field representative, 1998.



Mother and her daughters in Hneider

## **B. Summary of Findings**

My fieldwork in the Akkar region confirmed that due to its relative isolation and distance from Beirut, the area suffers from a tremendous lack of government attention and services. Moreover, this lack of government presence reinforces the power of local landlords and strongmen to the detriment of local men and women. From both my own observations and those of INGO and UNDP representatives this area is considered to be the poorest in Lebanon. Locals in only two villages, Bkerzala and Bajaa', reported that their situation had improved in the last five years. They claimed that their improvement in living standards was due to the migration and emigration of family members to larger cities and Australia.

The close proximity of Syria and the easy availability of inexpensive Syrian goods and services provide a safety net for the majority of Lebanese citizens living in the Akkar. Without this alternative source, it is possible that many Akkari's would not be able to survive in these areas and probably would not remain.

All of the factors above have affected the interests, capacities, opportunities and perceptions of INGOs working in this area. Mercy Corps made a courageous attempt, due to the effort of their field officer, to build wider community relationships with the work of the INGO and also attempted to include women in the projects, at the very least by keeping them informed. The Pontifical Mission has encountered significant problems in trying to build a local school due to the persistent objection of a powerful police official on the area. The Pontifical Mission dealt with the local male leaders of Kraybet el-Hayat and made no attempt to include women in their projects. CHF, working in the remote area of Wadi Khaled, made no attempt to build wider community relationships and instead worked with the local landlord, who other INGOs had worked with previously. This created a negative image of the INGO in the area and very little in the form of 'development' was accomplished. CHF made no attempt to work

with local women, though all of the women that I spoke to would have liked to have been at least given the opportunity to be involved.

It is also important to point out that due to the absence of government interest or a strong patron in the region, INGOs field officers and other personnel are able to have a freer hand in decision making concerning various aspects of the development project. This can be both positive and negative. It can work positively if the field officer is conscientious and knowledgeable. The case of Tleil and Ghaitla are good examples of how this could be so. The case of Bajaa' is an example of how an INGO can renege on a promise to complete a project, knowing that no one from the village has the power or the connections to force Mercy Corps to follow through with the planned school.

### **C. The Beka'a and Hermel**

This region lies just east of the Mount Lebanon mountain range. It is home to the fertile Beka'a valley and the ancient cities of Baalbek and Anjar. The Beka'a plain is a checkerboard of fields planted with grains, vegetables and vineyards. The economy of this region revolves around agriculture. This area is predominantly Shi'ite, except for Aarsal which is Sunni Muslim and Anjar which has a large

Armenian population. Several Christian villages are also scattered throughout the area. The approximate population of the region is 650,000 persons according to the CHF and UNDP representatives working in the area.

This region, like the Akkar and the South, has several landlords, who continue to wield influence. Additionally the two main political parties, Hizbullah and Amal endeavour to maintain a tight grip on their areas and followers. These parties run schools, clinics and are an important source of security and *wasta* for some. Syria's presence is absolute.

According to a UNDP consultant<sup>115</sup>, the Hermel was once the leading producer of hashish in the world. The Lebanese war provided the lack of internal control, and the Cold War provided Syria, the main authority in the area, the incentive to allow the illicit crop transit throughout the country without hindrance. Following the signing of the Ta'ef Accord and at the request of the United States government, Syria and Lebanon began to crack down on hash cultivation in the Beka'a and Hermel. Lebanon was promised aid in 1993 as compensation for the farmers in the area, whose livelihoods heavily depended on growing hash. This

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<sup>115</sup> 'Raymond', 1999.

aid has never materialised and the farmers have steadily become desperate and angry.

### 1. UNDCP and UNDP's Empty Promises

The UNDP received severe criticism from the inhabitants of the Beka'a/Hermel region. Nearly every farmer I spoke to felt the need to express his/her anger and disappointment concerning the work of the UNDP. In return for discontinuing the cultivation of hashish, the area was promised at least \$200 million in 1993 for rehabilitation and development. This programme was called the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and was co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, people in the area and government representatives allege that nothing has ever materialised. On February 28 1997, Ross Mountain, the UN Resident Co-ordinator at the time and UNDP Representative for Lebanon, delivered a speech at the "Signing Ceremony of the Programme Support for the Regional Development of Baalbek-Hermel", where he celebrated the success of the UNDCP programme and announced a new

UNDP programme with a target budget of \$110 million.<sup>116</sup> In development circles it is known that no substantial development programmes were ever implemented. The UNDP has come under attack from the Hizbullah MP Ibrahim Amin Sayyed, who complained that, 'Since it started the program five years ago, the UNDP has spent \$16 million, but no results have been achieved other than a small park near Baalbek that bears the UNDP sign.' He went on to say 'Are the farmers who all dropped the cultivation of illicit crops expected to get substitute crops from this park? This is a total insult to the farmers and to all of us!'<sup>117</sup>

The UNDP came here, but they didn't do anything. In fact they sent us backward.<sup>118</sup>

The UNDP brought from the whole world funds of \$4 million and \$3 million were spent on studies and research, and \$1 million were given as loans. Each loan was \$600. From the \$600 we needed \$100 to get to Baalbek to get the loan and another \$100 for all of the stamps, all that was left was \$400! Another step was something like \$320 million for development, we never saw anything!<sup>119</sup>

The UNDP enter as a competing party with the local organisations and it also caused the local organisations to compete with each other rather than to work together and co-operate for the benefit of the village.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>Signing Ceremony of the Regional Development of Baalbek-Hermel, **UNDP**, UNDP Internet Homepage, 28 February 1997.

<sup>117</sup>**The Daily Star**, Monday, July 19, 1999.

<sup>118</sup>Mohammed: adult man, farmer and driver, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>119</sup>Mohammed Hassan: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>120</sup>Kassem: married, adult man, local head of NGO, group interview, 1998.

The UNDP has many programmes. The UNDP's rural development programme of Hermel and Baalbek is facing many problems for many reasons, but mainly due to the people executing these projects.<sup>121</sup>

I agree and I think that also the people in Beirut are not executing these plans the way that they should be, but it being done under the political umbrella.<sup>122</sup>

The project is supposed to be for development, but when it reaches the ground the project will be transformed and rather than helping people it will burden them. You know most of these projects are free of content. Here is an example: When the UNDCP and the Ministry of Agriculture sold the farmers in the area cows to replace their lost income in growing hashish, it turned out that it cost the farmers more to feed the cow than they were able to pay. So they asked the ministry to take their cows back. And this was hard on the farmers here.

That is in other words, the project will pass through many channels and it will be filtered before reaching the ground.<sup>123</sup>

One farmer claimed that the bulk of the money went to Syria since it controls the area.

America wants to ban drugs in Lebanon so it gave around \$200 million, however, Syria assumes the responsibility for controlling this area of the Hermel and that's why Syria actually got the money. I know this because I live here. You may have not heard this before, but it's the truth.<sup>124</sup>

## 2. The Cow Fiasco

In 1993 the American government through USAID and the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture embarked on a disastrous scheme to sell American dairy cows to the destitute farmers of the Baalbek/Hermel in order to substitute their lost incomes

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<sup>121</sup>Fouad: married, adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>122</sup>Haj: single, adult man, local NGO field worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>123</sup>Kassem: married, adult man, local head of NGO, group interview, 1998.

<sup>124</sup>Ahmed: single, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

from the cessation of growing hashish. The cows were supposed to be sold for \$700 each to needy farmers and access to low interest credit was to be made readily available. This is far from what happened. Many of the cows were given to key people in the area, who in turn sold them at much higher prices. Some of the cows were ill and required expensive medical attention and majority of the farmers could not afford to feed the cows.

Cows were given to the people who are also certain key figures.<sup>125</sup>

We used to plant grains and the green plant (hashish), but the government rejected it and the government gave cows in return for stopping the green plant, but I myself didn't see anything from these 400 cows. I didn't see anything from the beginning or at the end.<sup>126</sup>

After we stopped the hash plantations, they gave us applications to give us cows and they rated each cow at \$2300 and out of this \$2300, we had to pay \$700 and so in all this area, which includes about 5,000 people, we received 15 cows! Some died. Some didn't give milk and some were diseased. Still there are villagers trying to return their loans.<sup>127</sup>

These cows were supposed to be attached to land, and there was supposed to be a study for this issue of cows. The information from them was that one cow can sustain 4 people, plus they were supposed to include a milk and dairy processing plant, but this was not completed. These products from the cows were supposed to have been sold and marketed but this never happened, and instead of helping people it burdened them.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Hassan: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>126</sup>Mustapha: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>127</sup>Ali Hassan: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>128</sup> Kassem: married, adult man, local head of NGO, group interview, 1998.

There was this project with the Ministry of Agriculture. We were given the chance to buy a pregnant dairy cow for \$2,300. We were told that this cow would give birth and that they were going to set up a dairy factory here. They told us that the cow would give us 40 kilos of product. In fact it was only 7 kilos. The loan was for 3 years, but we had to have a teacher or a soldier as a guarantee for the loan.

We were forced to buy insurance for \$113 for the vet, and we had to pay the vet when he came to check the cow. We complained, but they said this is how the system works, so we said okay. We were told that we had to buy the insurance and that the vet care would be free. But the vet takes 25,000LL. My cow was ill so I had to call the vet many times to check the cow so that I could send it back, because if we could prove that the cow was sick they had to take it back. Finally the vet wrote the report saying that my cow was unhealthy.

Another problem with the cows was that okay, now we have this cow, but how are we going to feed it! We couldn't afford to feed the cows. The government promised to set up a dairy factory, but they never did this.<sup>129</sup>

Besides all of the lies with the cows, there is an even bigger problem; all of the tons of milk that comes here from Syria. We can't compete. There is a lot of smuggled milk coming here.<sup>130</sup>

Some influential people got cows through *wasta* and starting selling them for \$1,500! The problem comes from the US government who co-ordinated with the Ministry of Agriculture, who co-ordinated in political ways. So, to me the problem is also with the Ministry and the mediators who gave the cows to the people that they had chosen. And of course the US has also some responsibility in this!<sup>131</sup>

Obviously the false promises of the UNDP, USAID and other government programmes have done nothing to obviate their plight and many farmers wanted to discuss the UNDP, because of the hard feelings that they were holding

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<sup>129</sup>Mohammad N.: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>130</sup>Mohammad N.: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>131</sup>Hussein: married, adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

inside.<sup>132</sup> The farmers feel helpless to express their anger at the UNDP, USAID, or their representatives.<sup>133</sup>

### 3. The Political Parties: Amal and Hizbullah

Another important factor in this area is the impact and influence of Amal and Hizbullah. These parties exercise a critical amount of control over the region. They are extremely powerful, at times violent, and backed by the Syrian government. They run hospitals, clinics, schools, back political hopefuls in elections and provide income for the armies of unemployed young men. Not belonging to one of these parties leaves one exposed and without potentially powerful *wasta*. However, as many report, being a party faithful does not always pay the expected dividends either.

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<sup>132</sup>Many in the development community believe that the USAID Cluster Program is in fact guilt money because of the failure of the UNDCP Programme and other programmes where USAID was involved.

<sup>133</sup>I was related a story (1999) by a person from a local environmental NGO, who was co-ordinating a project with the UNDP in the Hermel. When the NGO person approached a local farmer to ask him about his situation, the UNDP area representative began screaming at her to get away from the farmer. He would not relent and forced her to come back to the jeep. When she arrived she was furious and asked him why he had behaved like that. He replied just as angrily, "Are you crazy to be talking to these people?" "These people are like animals! You can not speak to them! Who knows what they might do to you!" She was so dismayed that when she returned to Beirut, she convinced the NGO members to cancel the contract with the UNDP.

We don't have anything because we don't belong to a certain political party and because of this we are poor—write this down—I don't care if the USA or France knows about this.<sup>134</sup>

It is such a pity that these people hide behind faith, because the Hizbullah they say that their welfare is good, but they are for themselves.<sup>135</sup>

I like to follow these things up because I don't work. I don't have a job and I really don't care about myself. I like to debate and argue with all of the young men especially those that join Hizbullah and Amal. I always tell them that despite the fact that I was with Amal myself. I got nothing out of them. I got absolutely nothing out of them...the political parties. First there was Nabih Berri who said Jnoub! Jnoub! (The South!) And then again it was Berri who said that the Beka'a was the "reservoir of fighters". This reservoir is going to end because there is nothing to feed it. They take them to fight for the resistance and they give them nothing in return. This was such a disappointment.<sup>136</sup>

These parties are natural by Syria. They originated from Syria. If a political party is strengthened it is strengthened by Syria and if a party is weakened, it is weakened by Syria. We can't really be surprised if we want a president he has to go and take the consent of Syria. Our government doesn't have any pride. Either they should admit that there is total chaos and let it be or they should be a government that respects itself and works as a real government.<sup>137</sup>

People join the political parties because they are poor and they are dying to join Hizbullah just to get 100,000 LL a month.<sup>138</sup>

And these political parties! Huh! They are supposed to help. But they don't. They are only interested in making money. Hizbullah and Amal have private schools and they are the most expensive in the area! I wish Israel would come and bomb them! They are beautiful to look at but no one can go!<sup>139</sup>

I have been with Amal for 15 years and I have given them all of my support, but they won't even deduct 100,000LL from the tuition bill of my child.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>M. H.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>135</sup>A. G.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>136</sup>A. K.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>137</sup>A. H.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>138</sup>M. A.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>139</sup>G. M.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>140</sup>Mohammad: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

The political parties don't represent anyone here. They are here to serve themselves.<sup>141</sup>

Write this down! I don't care if they come after me. I hope that Israel comes and bombs both of the parties. They are worthless!<sup>142</sup>

Recently the government built a hospital for the area, however according to local people and the INGO representative, the political parties, Hizbullah and Amal, fought over where the hospital would be located, and eventually the hospital ended up being built 30 kilometres away in the *jurd*' (farm land) so that no one has easy access to it.

I visited eight villages in this area: Charbine<sup>143</sup>, Fissan<sup>144</sup>, Quaigh<sup>145</sup>, Naasra Khirbet el-Bouten<sup>146</sup> and Maasri<sup>147</sup> in the area recognised as the Hermel. CHF is working directly in Charbine and Fissan.

The Hermel region is populated by five main tribes, which according to INGO and local mukhtars has a population of 50,000, all of which are Shi'ite. This area is considered extremely neglected and there has historically been very little state development. Many villages have no running water and the locals are

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<sup>141</sup>A. N.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>142</sup>H. N.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>143</sup> In this village I interviewed ten people in a group meeting and five individuals.

<sup>144</sup> In this village I interviewed nine members of the village committee (all men) and eleven locals.

<sup>145</sup> I interviewed fourteen people from this village in a group interview.

<sup>146</sup> I interviewed two people from this village.

forced to buy cistern water from dealers in the main city of Hermel. This area has suffered for many reasons as detailed above. Their tribal social structure has stigmatised them, and their 'uncivilised nature' is a source of derision outside the area. Moreover, many men and women from the area reported that their leaders, in order to maintain their powerful positions, purposely kept the area isolated, dependent and neglected.

Many of the farmers of the Hermel have completely lost their livelihoods, as they were the main cultivators of hashish. Their land is dry and not suitable for a wide variety of crops. The Assi River runs through the area and is plentiful enough to provide the entire area with water resources for irrigation and household use. However, Syria denies the Lebanese government or the farmers in the area access to water from this source because it is reserved for Syrian utilisation.

#### 4. The villages of Charbine, Fisan, Maasra Khirbet el-Bouten, Maasri and Quaigh

These villages are all quite close together and CHF is directly working in the villages of Charbine and Fisan. Charbine is the main village for the Nasreddine

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<sup>147</sup> I interviewed two people from this village.

tribe, who are fairly influential. Massri and Khirbet el-Bouten are very close, are part of the Nasreddine tribe, and have access to the newly constructed CHF agriculture road. Fisan is the centre for the Jafaar tribe, who are the largest landowners in the area. CHF built an agriculture road just outside the village of Charbine in order to connect it to other villages and to help farmers get to their fields, and helped the Jafaars get access to drinking water.



The village of Charbine

At the initial committee focus group, Charbine members were angry with the CHF field person, Hussein Hajdib, because they discovered that CHF was doing a water network for the Jaafar tribe and not for them. To most of these people water was a much higher priority. The problem seemed to be located in the fact

that the Nasreddine's from this area could not pool together the 'required' amount of money.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, like in every area where these INGO agriculture roads had been done, the people complained that the roads had not been covered with asphalt. This frustrated most of the farmers because they said that the roads would be destroyed after the first heavy rain.

These complaints aside the residents of the village were very grateful for the attention that they received from CHF. One farmer said of the new road 'all the world uses it.'<sup>149</sup>

If the government had done that road, the government would have done it with \$100,000, whereas the CHF did it only with \$ 10,000 and with better work.<sup>150</sup>

We as a committee believe that we can voice our concerns, so far there has been no complaints and we are thankful for what they have done. If there is anything wrong we can always get in touch with them.<sup>151</sup>

The first time they did the road, the committee rejected it, then they did it a second time. We rejected it again, then they hired a contractor and the road is now fine.<sup>152</sup>

They work until they ask the people if we like their work and after we say yes, then we give them the money.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup>CHF seems to press for the 30% to be paid in cash. In almost every area where I visited a CHF site the people had paid in cash, this was not always the case for the other INGOs working within the USAID Cluster Program.

<sup>149</sup>Mustapha: married, adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>150</sup>Hussein: adult man, group interview, 1998.

<sup>151</sup>Ali: adult man, committee member, group interview, 1998.

<sup>152</sup>Mustapha: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>153</sup>Ali Hassan: adult man, group interview, 1998.

The people here trust the organisation. No organisation has worked in this village before CHF.<sup>154</sup>



CHF's agricultural road between several villages in the Hermel

Fisan is home to the Jaafar tribe, who are very influential in the area. The people here were also very pleased with the work of CHF. However, many complained about having to pay 30 per cent of the project in cash.

A lot of organisations came and promised many things, but it wasn't until three or four months ago that CHF came and we thank this organisation very much for giving us the chance to have drinking water.<sup>155</sup>

This is the first time any organisation comes and does research and executes the plan. For a lot of organisations came and promised, and in the end never did anything.<sup>156</sup>

CHF came to this village and said that they are here to help the villagers. CHF asked the villagers to come up with a lively plan and the people said that there is one major problem...that is drinking water. So CHF brought engineers and did research and so they will promote our own villagers to work in this project.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup>Mustapha: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>155</sup>Faysal: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>156</sup>Ali: adult man, committee member, group interview, 1998.

<sup>157</sup>HusseinG.: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

This is the first organisation to invest a plan in our village!<sup>158</sup>

CHF has done a project of drinking water here. CHF changed the pipes. Villagers paid 30% of the entire cost.<sup>159</sup>

It took the project three months to be finished. There is about three kilometres of piping and now everyone in the village gets drinking water.<sup>160</sup>

The co-ordination was good, but we didn't like paying the 30%, we are poor.<sup>161</sup>

The whole project cost around \$16,000. The villagers paid \$4,000 and the organisation paid \$12,000. We tried our best to get money from the villagers. Some people paid and some people paid for others and some people had to let their children work on the project.<sup>162</sup>



A committee meeting in Fisan with men from the Jaafar tribe

The village of Quaigh is located in the Hermel just between Charbine and Fisan, where CHF is working. Most of the people in this village are farmers and herders.

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<sup>158</sup>Ali G.: adult man, group interview, 1998.

<sup>159</sup>Ali H.: adult man, group interview, 1998.

<sup>160</sup>Ghazi: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>161</sup>Hussein: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>162</sup>Fatima: married, adult woman, group interview, 1998.

Some have tried to grow tobacco, but most say that 'it is impossible to get a license.' They do not have a municipality, and they have not been given a date for elections. This tribe, the al Hiq, is the least influential tribe in the Hermel, and they have never grown hashish. According to local interviewees, the average income here is 200,000LL (\$133 or £83) per month if they are working, as there is a lot of unemployment here. They believe that their living and housing conditions have steadily worsened in the past five years, and most of the children do not go to school.<sup>163</sup>

Four years ago, the villagers pressed the government to dig a well in their village, as they were collecting rainwater and buying water as their grandfathers had done. The government did eventually dig the well. They also laid the piping to the village, however to everyone's shock and dismay, the government workers came back a few days later, closed the well and put a lock on it. They have tried in vain to find out why. No one has been able to give them an answer, not even the men who did it. They have no *wasta* and are the least powerful tribe in the area.

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<sup>163</sup>There is a public school in the village, but there are no teachers.



The locked well in Quaigh

We try to press for our rights. We talk to ministers and different leaders, but nothing changes.<sup>164</sup>

The villagers said that they had approached the INGO (CHF) which was working in the area to see if they would work in their village, but the answer from the INGO was no.

The NGO wouldn't want to work here because we are the weakest in financial and political terms.<sup>165</sup>

We were wondering why our village wasn't chosen by the NGO since we are right in between the villages that they are working in, and everyone will tell you that this is the poorest village in the area.<sup>166</sup>

Yes we are wondering why this happened.<sup>167</sup>

This happened because maybe the others have people to demand. We don't.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ahmad: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>165</sup> Nahida: adult woman, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>166</sup> Hussein: elderly man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>167</sup> Fatoum: adult woman, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>168</sup> Souad: adult woman, farmer, group interview, 1998.

Of all the villages around here, we are the most deprived of all the villages. The main reason for this is that we have no *wasta*! Yes...*wasta* is everything and we are weak without connections. *Wasta* is everything. You have to understand and remember this.<sup>169</sup>

According to various sources, including locals, INGO and UNDP representatives, average incomes for the whole area have plummeted from the average of 5,000,000 LL (\$3,333 or £2,083) per year or 400,000 LL per month per family to many reports of 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 (\$667 to \$1,333 or £417 to £833) per year or 83,000 LL to 166,000 LL (\$55 or £37 to \$111 or £74) per month per family.

The majority of the people from the Hermel did not want to discuss the work of the INGOs; they wanted to talk about government neglect, the forced termination of hash cultivation, and their resulting extreme poverty. They all referred to the cessation of hash cultivation as 'a disaster'. Many people here spoke of hunger and the unemployment rate was reported to be as high as 90 per cent!

At the time of planting hash, people here lived like in the Emirates. One person would work and benefit five persons. And when the USA asked for the stopping of hashish and promised to give alternatives, we did, but up till now nothing has happened on their part.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup>Hussein: elderly man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>170</sup>Ali H.: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

We are not with the planting of hashish, because we ourselves don't like it. But there is a demand. The farmer doesn't make a lot of money, but the people who trade these goods do. The traders are mostly in Zahleh and Jounieh. Even though we planted it, no one here dealt with it.<sup>171</sup>

When the hash planting existed, it created labour everywhere! Because these farmers did not only work in the fields, but there was a lot of building and other things going on.<sup>172</sup>

You know in this area, we planted drugs. We don't want to hurt anyone. No one wants to hurt anyone, but our lives are at stake. We think that drugs are wrong, but at least they should have stopped it in a different way. Even now if I can I will do it again, because there is a demand for it and nobody cares about us.<sup>173</sup>

Many of the farmers I spoke to threatened to go back to planting hash, and some have already started.<sup>174</sup>

The government has also historically neglected this area and many acknowledged that their own leaders purposely kept them ignorant and poor.

Many spoke of the 50-year government reign of Sabri Hamadeh (1926-1975) the Shi'ite landlord from the Beka'a who:

In order to keep his (Sabri Hamadeh) position and remain in power, he used to tell everyone in the government that he (as an MP) has people who eat rocks and kill for crimes of honour and this has been going on for the past years.<sup>175</sup>

One villager in Maasri recounted a story about how Sabri Hamadeh so easily manipulated the villagers:

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<sup>171</sup>M. Jafaar: adult man, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>172</sup>Mustapha: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>173</sup>Ahmed: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>174</sup>There are occasional news reports of army battalions being sent to the Hermel to burn hashish crops.

<sup>175</sup> Ahmad M.: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

The government wanted to put a railway station in the Hermel and run a train through the area. So Sabri went to the farmers and gathered them and said, "The government wants to put a railway station in your area, what do you think?" And all of the farmers raised their hands in the air and said Yes! Yes! And then the farmers said, "But, what do you think?" And he said, "What? You want foreigners to look at your women when they are passing through!" And then all of the farmers raised their fists and said No! No! So there was no station and no train. This was a real frustration for the government!<sup>176</sup>

Migration to Beirut, Zahleh or Tripoli was commonplace, but migration was the last resort and many did not want to leave their areas.

I would say that 80% of the villagers have someone either in Zahleh or Beirut.<sup>177</sup>

If someone has a son in Beirut, maybe he will be able to send the family money.<sup>178</sup>

There is no produce from our land and so people have to have relatives outside the village in order to survive.<sup>179</sup>

As far as we are concerned, if we had jobs here, we would not think of leaving our village. And leaving this village and going to Beirut, we have to think about the expenses of living in Beirut and so in both cases we are not happy.<sup>180</sup>

People who migrate to Beirut will not progress. That is because whatever he gets will be paid on rent, electricity, water etc... For example, this guy here sitting to the left, he went to Beirut for two years and came back with nothing.<sup>181</sup>

Again, Syria was seen as being both their persecutor and protector. It was said that Syria kept them from ignorance and starvation. The people of the

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<sup>176</sup>Ahmed: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>177</sup>Hussein J.: adult man, group interview, 1998.

<sup>178</sup>Mohammad: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>179</sup>Mustapha: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>180</sup>Ali J.: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>181</sup>Ahmed H.: adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

Hermel reported that they did not even receive Lebanese television or radio signals, and that there were no telephone lines in the area. The people, however, did receive Syrian television signals and to them this was their link to civilisation.

We don't know what is going on in our country, so if hell breaks in our country we will never be able to know because nothing reaches our village. Thanks to Syria we get to know something!<sup>182</sup>

All citizens near the borders find that it's better to go to Syria than Lebanon to buy things.<sup>183</sup>

It's easier to go to Homs (Syria) than Zahleh. There is a bus everyday that goes to Homs. The people who are working in this village prefer to go to Homs and pay 10% of the cost of things. The whole Bekaa' goes to Homs everyday!

There were no schools in the area and I was told that many children did not receive any education.

I have five children and I can't afford to send them to school. I put them in the house all day and my heart aches over them.<sup>184</sup>

We have to send our children to the Hermel for school. All of our work and effort goes into sending our children to school. Without the bus it costs us 500,000LL. There is no supervision in the public schools. Look every teacher belongs to one of the political parties so no one can say anything to them.<sup>185</sup>

Some even spoke of people moving to Syria in order to send their children to elementary school.

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<sup>182</sup>Ali: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>183</sup>Ali H.: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>184</sup>Hassan: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>185</sup>M.A.: married adult woman, farmer, individual interview, 1998.



Poor farmers in the Hermel: elderly husband and wife

#### 5. The villages of El Ain<sup>186</sup> and Nabi Ousman<sup>187</sup>

These two villages are located within a few kilometres of each other in the north-eastern region of the Beka'a, and as in the Hermel, the termination of hashish cultivation and smuggling has caused a massive loss of income; though this area has not suffered as greatly as the Hermel. The YMCA has been working in this area for about 25 years and has an excellent reputation in both villages. They initiated a new programme as part of the USAID Cluster Program in September 1997. The YMCA started a canning and pickling program for some 42 women from the area. The women are trained in canning procedures and marketing. The idea is that the women will market their products with the Y's help initially. Once

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<sup>186</sup> I interviewed around three people in a group and seven individuals from this village.

the programme is self-sufficient, the INGO will withdrawal. Many women in the area were excited about this programme. Even if they were not able to attend the classes, which lasts seven weeks, many women in the area reported that their neighbours were teaching them the new techniques. The women stressed that this programme may not only help them make some money in the future, but it helps them in their households as preserves are consumed by their families all year long.

This course is very important. It is true that we learned many things about fruits, but we also acquired the knowledge of a healthy way of canning.<sup>188</sup>

We acquired the group work rather than individual work. It gives me a place to exercise personality building. It is very important for women.<sup>189</sup>

We will start with organisations and then we will probably start a co-operative. We can't start our own.<sup>190</sup>

We can now train others to do the same thing. They also have no problem learning something new.<sup>191</sup>

Before this project, we had nothing to do, but probably stay in the house all day long.<sup>192</sup>

We thank the YMCA for working in this very neglected area and through this project we got the chance to meet others and work together.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> I interviewed around six people from this village.

<sup>188</sup> Fatima H.: married adult woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>189</sup> Alia: married adult woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>190</sup> Mona: married adult woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>191</sup> Fatima N.: married adult woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>192</sup> Aisha: single adult woman, group interview, 1998.

<sup>193</sup> Mira: married adult woman, group interview, 1998.



YMCA's canning workshop for women in El Ain

One of the trainers told me that when they started this programme it was discovered that many women did not have transportation and could not attend the classes if they lived far from the centre of town. The YMCA rented a bus that collected the women in the morning and took them home on the training days which were three days per week.

The YMCA co-ordinator in the area, Dr. Nasreddine, who inherited the post from his father, explained how the YMCA encountered problems with local and foreign players in the area when they initially began the most recent phase of their development programme. Another man who was present spoke of how the YMCA was warned that they were going to fail here because of the complex

nature of the area, and that the UNDP and CHF bet against the possibility of the YMCA being able to complete its work.

There was a bet that the Y is not going to work well, but after the work that has been done and due to the interaction and the feedback that they got..a lot of organisations also wanted to prove that they were successful and started saying that they were working in these areas. Also I believe that if the Y was not able to compete then its work would have lacked something, instead these organisations are competing, they should co-ordinate and finish the work that has already been started. A lot of organisations come and do studies but nothing is observed, especially from the UNDP, which is a morally low organisation. Did you know that the UNDP bet me that the Y will not be able to work well, but the UNDP lost the bet. CHF also bet that the Y would fail here.<sup>194</sup>

It was also stated that, 'This area is subjected to extreme familial and political influence, so when the YMCA came here they had to bargain their position.'<sup>195</sup>

The good thing also about the YMCA is that they don't come from above and they ask for their 30% to be paid by the cost of labour, no cash. If a project that costs \$1,000 then the YMCA will pay \$700 and the beneficiaries will work for the cost of the 30%.<sup>196</sup>

In Nabi Ousman, the farmers appreciated the help of the YMCA in building irrigation canals. However it seems that there were many other problems affecting this village.

The Y has done a good job for us seven or eight years ago. But if you are dying of thirst and someone came and gave you a drop of water, then you will like it no matter what.<sup>197</sup>

They have been affected by all of the problems that plagued the region in general. However, this village also suffers because they belong to the political party Qawmiyah.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>194</sup>Habib: adult man, engineer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>195</sup>Hassan: married adult man, sheik, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>196</sup>Habib: married adult man, engineer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>197</sup>Sobhi: married elderly man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

Most of the area around this village is Hizbullah this village belongs to the political party Qawmiyah. This is the reason for our deprivation.<sup>199</sup>

I disagree! We are deprived because of tribal reasons. Deprivation exists, not because of different parties.<sup>200</sup>

Mainly people here are broken, there is no insurance, medication, we are deprived and isolated and if something happens to you...you have to take care of yourself. But it's politics that is playing here, not the economy.<sup>201</sup>

The locals of Nabi Ousman were also highly concerned about the fact that people in the area could no longer send their children to school. Many could not even afford to send their children to the public school.

Here some children don't go to the public school...actually 80 % of the children here don't go to school because they can't afford it.<sup>202</sup>

Before 90 % used to go to school and outside the village, but now more than 20 % can not go out because there is no productivity.<sup>203</sup>

The level of illiteracy is increasing 99%, because people cannot afford to go school here.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>198</sup>Antoun Saadah, a Greek Orthodox political ideologue, started this party in 1936. He believed that the Fertile Crescent should be considered one country, with no borders and no segregation according to religion. One people, Christians and Muslims, living in one land historically called "Greater Syria" with a common enemy; the Jews.

<sup>199</sup>Rowia: married woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>200</sup>Mohammad: married man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>201</sup>Nabi: married man, farmer, construction worker, group interview, 1998.

<sup>202</sup>Mohammad N.: married man, farmer, driver, group interview, 1998.

<sup>203</sup>Rowia: married woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>204</sup>Ali: single adult man, driver, group interview, 1998.

## 6. The town of Arsal

The town of Arsal<sup>205</sup> is located in the far north-eastern area of the Beka'a and is surrounded by the Eastern Lebanese Mountains. According to the local mukhtar and local NGO representatives, the population of Arsal is approximately 25,000, and most of its inhabitants are engaged in agriculture to some extent. The town is extremely remote, has a dry, desert-like climate and limited resources. Fruit production (mainly cherries and apricots) and cereal production (mainly wheat and barley), keeping livestock (goats and sheep) and quarrying are the main sources of income for the town. Smuggling from Lebanon to Syria used to be a lucrative job for many inhabitants of Arsal; however this illicit trade has all but stopped due to Syria's insistence.

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<sup>205</sup> I interviewed at least 20 people from this village.



The town of Aarsal

Oxfam UK had been working in this village for several years. At times they worked with other INGOs, like the YMCA or MCC, but they consistently worked with the local NGO, the Aarsal Rural Development Association (ARDA). The local men and women in this village were very pleased with the work of Oxfam UK. It seems that the organisation spent a lot of time building relationships and creating working partnerships with the local people, the local NGO and other INGOs on a consistent basis. Unfortunately, Oxfam UK abruptly closed their office in Lebanon and their projects ended. Many men and women in Aarsal felt that they had been abandoned. Through the USAID project, CHF was constructing an agriculture road in Aarsal, and the locals felt that this was not really what they needed in their village. They also complained extensively that CHF did not work like Oxfam UK.

They felt that CHF bypassed the local NGO and the local people, working only with close associates of the INGO who were local strongmen in the village.

I respect Oxfam. You know why? Because they respect the needs of the villagers. When they worked here it was not an imposed project or a need of the organisation. It was for the needs of the villagers.<sup>206</sup>

I wish that we could deal more with Oxfam and not CHF. *Why?* I just like the work of Oxfam better. It fits.<sup>207</sup>

In Arsal, there are basic ideas about CHF's work. For instance, this road...the way it was done...the quality of work...the way they approached this village and the money. It was not acceptable. Ayman (the mission head of CHF) and his colleagues work in these villages as if he owns the organisation.<sup>208</sup>

Three generations of women in Arsal



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<sup>206</sup> Qassem: married, adult man, local head of NGO, group interview, 1998.

<sup>207</sup> Haj: single adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>208</sup> Sayyed: married adult man, NGO worker, group interview, 1998.

## **D. Summary of Findings**

Again in the Beka'a and the Hermel region, there is a significant deficiency of government attention. Though it is not as lacking as in the Akkar region, it is still a pervasive problem according to the local men and women. Like the Akkar, the positions of landlords and local strongmen are enhanced due to the lack of direct state involvement. However, this region has added factors that greatly complicate matters for INGOs working here. Firstly, the tenacious presence of the political parties and the pressure that they exert on local people and development organisations greatly influences development projects on the ground and the viability of even attempting such a project or programme.

Secondly, the fact that this region has suffered a severe blow to its local economy from the cessation of hashish cultivation has created a situation of desperation for the local men and women, who have seen their income dwindle to almost nothing in a matter of two years. The deficient attempts by the UNDCP, UNDP and the US government along with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture to find some sort of replacement economy, including new crops, have produced a sense of hostility towards organisations coming from the outside to work in this

area, and many of the INGOs were looked at, at least initially, with a great deal of suspicion.

Lastly, the ubiquitous presence of Syrian troops in this region reinforces the fact that the people from the Hermel and Beka'a are living under foreign occupation. This heavy Syrian military presence has created a complication for INGOs working here and they must constantly bargain their way through the rough terrain of political sensitivities and regional diplomacy.

The work of the INGOs was again quite mixed. CHF's work in the Hermel met with the satisfaction of most of the locals, however they were not as successful in Aarsal and the men and women of Ras Baalbek refused to let them work in their village. Oxfam UK was well respected in Aarsal and the work of the YMCA was also approved of in El Ain. The YMCA and Oxfam were the only two organisations that included women in their programmes.

### **E. Hasbaya**

This area is situated in the south-eastern part of Lebanon next to Mount Hermon, which separates it from Syria. The area is characterised by its cold weather, mountainous terrain and two main rivers: *el Hasbani* and *el Wazzani*.

Most of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood; mainly growing olives and deciduous fruits. Administratively part of South Lebanon, Hasbaya was at the time of my fieldwork almost completely cut-off from the state. The former Israeli security zone dissected the area just north of the main town of Hasbaya. Moreover, the Council of the South did not include this area on their agenda for development projects. According to the YMCA field officer and a local mukhtar the population of the region is approximately 70,000 persons. All of the men and women that I interviewed complained that the Israeli partition destroyed their region economically because they had no access to the main markets in the principal city of Hasbaya.

### 1. The village of Kfeir

Kfeir<sup>209</sup> is a beautiful Christian and Druze village. Once known for its grains and olives, the Israeli occupation has meant the slow death of the village and their agricultural livelihoods.<sup>210</sup> According to the INGO representative, the local mukhtar and interviewees, the average income in the village was about 300,000 LL (\$ 200 or £ 133) per month per family, and the entire socio-economic

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<sup>209</sup> I interviewed approximately 12 people from this village. Five persons were part of a group interview.

circumstances of the village have been interrupted. Firstly, the locals are cut off from their main market in the city of Hasbaya, and many farmers have ceased harvesting their crops, because there is nowhere for them to market their produce. Secondly, the occupation has obstructed Kfeir's access to their fresh water springs, which are guarded by the Israelis. Now they have no water for irrigation nor do they have access to potable water or water for household use. Additionally, though they have a public school in their village, many residents used to send their children to Hasbaya for education because the level was considered to be better. Now if they want to send their children to schools other than the local one, they must send them to Dayr Al Ahmar, which is one hour away by car using very dangerous roads. Because of these factors many of the villagers have migrated to Beirut.

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<sup>210</sup> This is no longer true, as the Israelis have withdrawn from these positions.



A traditional house (bayt) in Kfeir Zeytoun

Often referred to as Kfeir Zeytoun (an olive jar) this village feels like a ghost town. In fact, some of the people we met were just there visiting and others told us that this was their last year 'unless something major changes'. Many of the older residents still tend century's old olive trees in hope that this year will be different. They claimed that:

When we had olives, each family used to get \$ 1,000 per month, but now we don't sell much because there was some publicity against olive oil. So people stopped buying it and bought Mazola instead. Now we get a lot of competition from outside; Greece, Italy, Spain and Syria. If you remove the competition that came two years ago, then it would have been a different situation here.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> George: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

The living conditions here have deteriorated. We had olives and an olive oil season, but now we have nothing. The season for the olives is October and November, we will harvest this year, but maybe in the future we will not be able to harvest. This is my livelihood, I own it, it is very hard to leave it.<sup>212</sup>

Most people here either have to work in the army or teach. In Kfeir there used to be 60% farming of grains...now there is 5 % farming of grains. Most of the people have olives, but there is a problem, no marketing for products and it is for this reason that we have financial problems. Secondly, the internal market is dead and through the Beka'a and Beirut there are a lot of foreign products coming in.<sup>213</sup>

The YMCA is working in this village, and they had completed an agricultural road that passed through the olive fields when I arrived there in August 1998.

As far as the agricultural road, it serves a lot people around 70 % of farmers.<sup>214</sup>



YMCA's agricultural road in Kfeir Zeytoun

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<sup>212</sup>Majid: married adult man, construction worker, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>213</sup>Mohammad H.: married adult man, store owner, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>214</sup>Wadih Abu Risk: married adult man, INGO area representative, 1998.

The YMCA was also negotiating with UNIFIL, who were in turn negotiating with the Israeli army to allow them to build a water pumping system to the village from the springs that lie just on the outskirts of their village, near the border of the occupation zone.

The villagers were generally pleased with the work of the YMCA, though some thought that water was their first priority and that the agricultural road didn't benefit everyone.

The road is good, but we DO have a water problem!<sup>215</sup>

Our priority is sewage...this is more important than water!<sup>216</sup>

No! Water must come first!<sup>217</sup>

I think that the men of the Christian Association put people here to service their own interests. I think that the road that is being dug is not as important as sewage and water. Mostly the road leads to land of specific people. These men which the YMCA works for are a result of the war and belong to political parties. They (the men) are crooked and have no conscience.<sup>218</sup>

One villager, who happened to be a Druze sheik said that,

The YMCA dug an agricultural road and built a bridge on the Hasbani River. If they dig a road in Akkar or Zhgorta everyone will benefit, we are all from the same country.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Marie: married adult woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>216</sup> Walid: adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>217</sup> Marie: married adult woman, housewife, group interview, 1998.

<sup>218</sup> Majid G.: adult man, farmer, mini bus driver, group interview, 1998.

<sup>219</sup> Mohammed: married adult man, Druze sheik, teacher, group interview, 1998.

Besides these obvious infrastructure needs it was also very clear from all of the people that they needed agricultural development. They needed help in the form of new farming techniques, equipment and inputs. Many complained that their land needed to be repaired as they were terrace farmers and that there were no small loan programmes that could really help them.

The YMCA was also planning some courses here for men and women, much the same as the project in El-Ain. However, though they appreciate the Y's efforts, many were sceptical as to how these courses were going to help them to make a living. They reasoned that in the first place they were farmers and they wanted to stay farmers. They would not mind learning a trade, like plumbing or sewing, but their question was where were they going to work after they learned these trades? 'How many plumbers do you need in one village?' was a constant question.

Wadih Abu Risk was the YMCA co-ordinator for this region. He was originally from this village and had worked with the YMCA in the past. He, along with every one I spoke to believe that the future of the village was dependent on an Israeli withdrawal.

Kfeir had just elected a new municipality, so they were all waiting to see the results and were hoping that through them, they would get some long overdue government attention. Like other rural areas, government development was absent, however the situation was blamed more on the war and the Israeli occupation rather than on the government directly.



Druze farmer returning from his field in Kfeir Zeytoun

## **F. Summary of Findings**

Obviously, the Israeli occupation has made working towards comprehensive development extremely difficult, if not impossible. As long as the locals do not have access to their water for the irrigation of their crops or a main market to sell their produce, the desire to migrate will continue.

YMCA's efforts were appreciated, though many of the local men and women were sceptical about the various training programmes that the INGO was planning to introduce. Many said that they would prefer to learn new techniques and skills in agriculture.

### **G. South Lebanon**

South Lebanon is the region extending from the Awwali River in the north to the village of Ras al Naqoura just next to the Israeli border in the south. It borders the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Syro-Lebanese border to the east. The population of this region is estimated at just over one million persons. Most of the men and women resident in this area are dependent on agriculture for a living. The main crops are vegetables, tobacco and olives in the interior whilst bananas and citrus fruits are grown in the coastal area. The Litani River provides most of the water for irrigation. The two main city ports of the region are Sidon (Saida) and Tyre (Sour). South Lebanon has witnessed major political and military events all through its history from the times of the Assyrian kings to the latest Israeli intervention.

The situation of the South cannot be explained without speaking about the traditional landlords. The South, mostly populated by Shi'ites with some scattered

Christian villages, has been dominated by four main families: the Osseirans, Assads, Zeins, and Khalils.

There is a well-known story concerning Ahmed Bek Assad, a notable Shi'ite landlord from South Lebanon, who when asked by his peasant-clients to build a school for their children, he responded by saying, 'Why bother? My son, Kamel is attending school.' <sup>220</sup>

These families basically ruled the South (excluding Sidon) up until the mid-1980s when their power was largely subverted by the Amal militia leader Nabih Berri—current Speaker of the House. Berri represents a newly emerging class of Lebanese leaders; warlords who gained power by maintaining a group of followers that only believed in sectarian solidarity, by participating in the violent war machine, and by having the support of an outside sponsor.

Relations with the government in the South are much better than in any other rural area in the country. The Council for the South, with patronage from Nabih Berri insures that the area receives a fair share—if not more—of development funds. The Council for the South was originally set-up in the 1970s in order to concentrate government money for the development of neglected areas, which were under Israeli bombardment with the intention that this investment would discourage migration to Beirut. However, the situation has

changed into one in which Nabih Berri indirectly appoints key members in the organisation and behaves like the ultimate landlord. He has been able to utilise government funds allocated to the Council for the South for his own personal political ambitions. For instance, interviewees understood his power to be such that if a house belonging to a member of his political party was damaged by shelling, he would be generously reimbursed, whilst if a house belonging to a supporter of one of Berri's political adversaries should happen to be shelled, then that person would most likely receive very little compensation—if any—from the Council. Many people that I interviewed in the South blessed Nabih Berri saying, '*Allah Ykhali al-Ustaz*', literally, 'May God keep the teacher.' Nabih Berri, a lawyer by trade, is commonly referred to as '*al-Ustaz*.'

In interviews with INGO personnel it was reported to me that the majority of farmers in the South have running water in their houses, electricity and fully equipped schools<sup>221</sup>. Most admit that this high level of development really began in 1996 and was done to keep them from flooding the cities during constant Israeli bombardment. Although poverty and destruction are obvious in the villages that I visited, the monthly income per month per family is higher on

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<sup>220</sup> Jamil: adult man, physician, 1998.

average than in other rural areas. The typical reported income was about 700,000 LL (\$467 or £292)<sup>222</sup> per month, and the majority of this income is gained through the production of government subsidised tobacco.

### 1. The village of Zaoutar <sup>223</sup>

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is working the village of Zaoutar, which is south of Nabatiye and precariously situated on the Israeli occupation border. All border villages are dangerous places to live, the constant Israeli shelling, as well as the infighting, sometimes violent, between the two main political militias, Amal and Hizbullah keep the villagers in a chronic state of fear and panic. The MCC representative, Bassam Chamoun, explained the programme of the MCC as being low-key. They do not advertise and they do not necessarily want anyone to know who is doing the work.

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<sup>221</sup> Please note that this did not include the zone occupied by Israel.

<sup>222</sup> According to local people, mukhtars and INGO representatives.

<sup>223</sup> I interviewed at least 30 people from this village.

We don't actually do the work ourselves, we contact the head people in each village. Our aim is not to give things to the farmers in the relief sense, but we are working in capacity building. Most help from the NGOs in this area has lessened a great deal, but we have stayed. We work quietly. For instance, we did a drip irrigation system in this village to help the farmers save water. In many cases the farmers do not know which organisation is doing the work because we do not advertise. We helped to do a road and many people said that we should put a sign saying that we did this road, but this is not our goal to advertise what we are doing. We are interested in working with the grassroots, with the local farmers. We are more interested in community development.<sup>224</sup>

The MCC field representative also told me in a previous interview about the difficult situation of the women in the South because it is their job to string the tobacco. Stringing tobacco is an arduous, time consuming chore. The women use long metal needles with string tied at the end of the needle. They pierce a small bunch of leaves at the bottom and then drag the bunch onto the string. When the bundle is full and packed tightly, they hang the tobacco from the ceiling of their house to dry. Women do this job all year long and their hands are stained reddish brown. Many young girls spoke about not being able to go to school because of this year-long chore. Observing this, the MCC field representative searched for an alternative, and found a leaf-stringing machine that is used in Greece. He purchased the machine and then discovered later that the Lebanese leaves were smaller than the Greek leaves and the machine would not hold

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<sup>224</sup>Bassam Chamoun: INGO representative, 1998.

them. He said that they are trying to make adjustments and hoped that some day the machine would work.



Women stringing tobacco in Zaoutar Gharbieh; men help to prepare the leaves

Bassam Chamoun met me in the South and spoke to me about the projects that the MCC was doing; vegetable tent distribution, irrigation, and aid (fertiliser, seeds etc...) for farmers following Israeli shelling. I was not able to conduct any interviews on that day without his presence and he claimed that it was because he needed to learn too. When we reached Zaoutar, he took me to the house of Habib Yaghy. He said, 'Habib is the man I deal with here. He is the Secretary of the Tobacco Syndicate for the South and he knows our programmes

very well.<sup>225</sup> Habib also showed me the tobacco-stringing machine, which was located in his storage room.

The village of Zaoutar is divided into two separate villages: Zaoutar Sharieh (east) and Zaoutar Garbieh (west). MCC was working in Zaoutar Garbieh. This was an active farming community and every household was busy with tobacco and/or tending vegetables in tents. Vegetable tents were a recent addition to the farming routine here, but in this area people who could afford them were doing quite well, and their production capacity had reportedly increased. Unfortunately, these long nylon tents are also easy targets for Israeli shelling and many families spoke of great hardship and loss following their destruction. After one particularly ruinous raid, the MCC decided to replace the destroyed tents. Unfortunately for the farmers, there was no distribution. Instead, Habib, MCC's local contact, was given the tents and he split them between himself and his brother. The farmers in this area were furious and this type of "grassroots development" has caused bitterness and resentment.

In this village we know everyone and all of us know what's going on. We villagers usually get together to discuss the situation of the village. And as far as the tents go...well Habib Yaghy along with the other guy A'kl seem to own tents. Habib owns around 10 tents and A'kl around 3 tents.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup>Bassam Chamoun: INGO representative, 1998.

<sup>226</sup>Mohammad: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

Habib works for Hariri and he has 10 tents for vegetables and when we ask him, he says that he bought them with his own money. Habib has around 10 tents and A'kl has around 3 tents. But we know they are from the MCC. No one from the NGO has ever spoken to us.<sup>227</sup>

If they give the responsibility to a person in charge for distribution, he will take them himself. We didn't get anything. There has been no co-ordination. We bought tents with our own money. Ours were shelled by the Israelis and destroyed. They came around and took names of the people whose tents have been shelled, but instead, Yaghy's brother got all of the tents and we didn't get any.<sup>228</sup>

Yes we have heard of the MCC. How? Well about 3 years ago they brought samples of fertilisers and seeds, not to all farmers, but to *some* farmers. The aid came in the form of tents. Though first they got chemicals, then they got the nylon. My tents were shelled, but I wasn't among the people who got help. Habib in this village is the one who decides and he works through Mohammed Ali Ahmed...he's an engineer and they both work with the Baath party.<sup>229</sup>

If there had really been aid given in the form of tents, seeds, water, seedlings, etc... then we would have benefited. We need these things desperately. But as farmers here we do not have direct contact with the people from the MCC, they have a contract with certain people in the village. There should have been a representative from their organisation (the MCC) to contact the farmers.<sup>230</sup>

You know certain people receive these aids, but how do I know that these people are not selling this aid? And they do sell it. We do not have direct contact with the people from the MCC. They have a contract with certain people in the village.<sup>231</sup>

The best thing is that the MCC should have a representative who will visit the different villages and villagers so that when MCC does something, it will show. It will really be helping for everyone—not just some. That way if the rep comes to the village, he will talk to the villagers and the villagers will tell them what they need and so this way it will also show what MCC is doing. In that way if someone's tent was damaged, for example, then there would be direct help and direct communication. Maybe the two people who are benefiting in this village don't even pay for plant medicine and seeds.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>227</sup>Ahmed: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>228</sup>H. Ali: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>229</sup>Y. M.: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>230</sup>M. H.: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>231</sup>Mohammad: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>232</sup>Y. D.: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

Basically, they (the MCC) are in one valley and we the farmers are in another valley.<sup>233</sup>

There were a lot of criticisms that were made when the nylon tents were distributed. I mean how could they come and give to my neighbour and pass me. They passed without giving to me.<sup>234</sup>

We know of the MCC but we have no direct contact with it. Maybe people on the level of individuals have benefited from it. One or two or maybe three people from each village have benefited from the work they do.<sup>235</sup>

Yaghy Akl was an agricultural engineer in Syria, but he wasn't doing well. His sister has a good contact with Bahyia Hariri. She may have helped him. His tents—he probably pays nothing—he gets them from MCC. He gets his seeds, the nylon etc...for nothing—again aid from MCC. And he's wealthy by the way. In the end he doesn't really care if he loses or profits because he is not working hard for it.<sup>236</sup>

INGOs should have representatives in order to prevent stealing and people like Habib. If they do that then they can organise the farmers. It's not the bucket of chemicals that makes the difference, but it's the way it's done. It's good to feel that an organisation cares like a father who takes care of a son.<sup>237</sup>

This organisation! MCC works with the very person who works for himself!<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>233</sup>Hassan A.: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>234</sup>Habib: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>235</sup>L. M.: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>236</sup>Y. A.: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>237</sup>Ali: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>238</sup>Hannah: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

## 2. The villages of Siddiquine and RecheKnanay

The village of Siddiquine<sup>239</sup> and RecheKnanay<sup>240</sup> are located just outside of the city of Qana, the site of the massacre of 107 persons by Israeli bombing in April 1996. According to representatives from Save the Children, over 50 per cent of the people killed in Qana were from the village of Siddiquine, and many of the people I spoke to had lost family members or friends. One woman I met had lost nine members of her family, including both of her parents. The village itself was in shambles, almost every house had a wide gaping hole somewhere, and the streets were empty. Constant Israeli shelling, as well as political infighting between the two militias kept these farmers, like most farmers residing in border areas, in a constant state of fear. Tobacco is the main crop here and almost everyone was growing it. They spoke of working in their fields at night, because of the fear of shelling during the day. They said that they had to work hard and fast in order to tend to and harvest their crops. And they routinely said, 'We sell our tobacco to Berri.' According to the local mukhtar and reports from local people, the average income is about 7,000,000 LL (\$4,667 or £ 2,916) per year

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<sup>239</sup> I interviewed approximately 15 people in individual and group interviews in this village

per family. The principal of the local school spoke of the high numbers of people, who have emigrated, especially to Germany. This he said was a life-line for the families. He said that almost every family had someone in Germany, and 'with the money that the relatives send life is manageable.'<sup>241</sup> Most feel that their living conditions will never improve until Lebanon and Israel sign a peace agreement. There is no doubt that their housing and living conditions have deteriorated in the last five years, and in this village more than any other, the effects of ongoing conflict could be distinctly felt. The people were kind and hospitable, but they also exhibited signs of aggressiveness, agitation and nervousness.

Save the Children have been working for years in this village. They work primarily with women and children and they initiated a special programme in 1994 for children, which is taught and run by the local youth.<sup>242</sup> This programme is quite successful and seems to have given the young people and children a reprieve from the death and destruction that surrounds them.

The Save programme is nice because they teach us songs, drawing etc...I also went to reading schools and here it is nice because they don't study like any other school.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> I interviewed around 15 people from this village. At least nine people were present in a group interview.

<sup>241</sup>Hassan Y.: married adult man, school principal, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>242</sup>Seven children from this program also perished in the Qana massacre.

<sup>243</sup>Ali: seven year old boy, individual interview, 1998.

I volunteered and my love towards children has made me apply to work with Save the Children. Before 1994 Save the Children had a programme including 100 children. In 1994, they asked for people my age to volunteer. But now it is a summer camp, even in winter, we have like one or two days that we meet on I believe that the children have changed a lot especially that they are village children. These children have learned confidence, especially when they are talking to others. It has also encouraged shy, embarrassed children to have confidence to speak up.<sup>244</sup>

This programme is directed towards children. The programme is established in such a way to group people together in a way to teach them co-ordination and sharing. It is also to discover the children's talent and confidence. It costs 500LL (\$.33 or 21 pence) for each student per month. During the continuous club the summer camp is 250LL and when we have trips it costs 1000LL. Some children can't pay the monthly 500LL, but the trainers don't turn them away. The trainers pay or someone else, we don't let them go.<sup>245</sup>

Before April's war (Qana) there was a girl who was in the Save programme. During the massacre she lost her parents and five of her brothers. The teachers in the Save programme kept working with her to get her to speak again, and during two days of camp, they discovered that she was improving, and she has started to speak.<sup>246</sup>

We have learned that a lot of children have beautiful voices! They also dance the *dabke* (Lebanese traditional folk dance). A lot of people do acting and sketches to make everyone laugh, and others like to draw. It's good for the children.<sup>247</sup>

We have found out through this programme that some children have talents and with at this program would have been impossible<sup>248</sup>

The programme includes everything and it is very well organised and the children don't get bored. First we started the programme by discussing a certain topic—like teeth after that they play, draw and sing etc...about the lesson.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>244</sup>Miriam: single young adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>245</sup>Zeinab: single young adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>246</sup>Miriam: single young adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>247</sup>Fatima: single young adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>248</sup>Amal: single young adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>249</sup>Zeinab: single young adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.

Through this programme, we the trainers got the idea that we wanted to clean up our village. We thought of a hygiene campaign. We not only wanted to clean the village but also to put permanent barrels in the village for people to throw their garbage. We told Munza, our Save representative and she raised it with Save and they agreed! We went to all of the houses and got 5,000LL from each house and hired a truck to carry away all of the garbage!<sup>250</sup>

After every class, the children are asked to evaluate the session. Then the trainers evaluate themselves and the class. When the Save the Children representative visits every month, they evaluate together and make changes.

The trainers said that they are now co-ordinating programmes with the local people and the local elementary school. Some are concerned about the financing of the programme. They felt that there should be more money for crafts and they did not feel that the programme would be sustainable without someone visiting and co-ordinating from Save the Children.

You know what it is like to be run locally? Impossible! It is better to bring someone from outside, especially when children establish this with teachers. I believe that it is not sustainable without Save the Children.<sup>251</sup>

Unlike Zaoutar, the villagers here expressed dissatisfaction with the government. They felt that the government's interest here was 'non-existent'. They explained it was due to political reasons, as they were supporters of Hizbullah.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup>Kafaa: single young adult woman, teacher, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>251</sup>Hassan: married adult man, school principal, individual interview

<sup>252</sup>Nabi Berri is the head of Amal, a competing militia in the area.

## H. Summary of Findings

The Israeli occupation of the South and the chronic bombardment of Southern villages is the most difficult hurdle for INGOs working there to overcome. Constant shelling and destruction mark the daily lives of the inhabitants of this war-torn region, and in many villages it is simply too dangerous for INGOs to work. They have, in some cases, had to abandon projects and programmes due to this hazardous working environment.

In this region, unlike others, the relationship with the government is quite strong. This strong relationship built via the Council of the South has contributed to the withering away of the power of the local landlords. The majority of men and women see this as a positive outcome, though many complained that Nabih Berri was in fact, through his position in the government, becoming the sole patron and most powerful landlord.

The work of the INGOs in this region varied greatly between the abundant praise for Save the Children and the vociferous criticism for the MCC. The two programmes were completely different and it was observed that Save the Children made a great effort to work with empowering the youth of societies torn

apart by war, whilst the field officer of MCC worked for basically for the empowerment of himself and his close allies in Zaoutar.

### **I. The Shuf**

The Shuf Mountains are in the southern half of the Mount Lebanon range. The area is spectacularly beautiful, with lush green valleys, fountains and springs, narrow gorges, rivers and waterfalls, and the omnipresent terraced mountainsides. Unlike the northern half of Mount Lebanon, the Shuf is sparsely populated as many of its residents fled following the Israeli invasion of 1982 and the fighting between the Christians and Druze that broke out in the wake of the Israelis' departure.

This area is historically home to the Druze sect and is jealously guarded by its leader, Walid Jumblatt. Walid Jumblatt publicly claims to work hard to protect this area's natural resources and beauty. It is clean and a frequent destination for tourists and picnickers. Christian villages are scattered throughout the area, though most were levelled following the "War of the Mountain" in 1987. The population of the area is estimated by a local mukhtar and an INGO field officer to be approximately 300,000 persons. Many residents in the area rely on agriculture at least for part of their income. The main crops grown in this region

are vegetables, apples, olives and apricots. Since the end of the war, several INGOs have started to work in this area. The focus of the work has been to assist displaced persons who wish to return to their villages of origin. Programmes vary and include the rebuilding of houses and infrastructure to conflict resolution programmes that work with local people to help them deal with overcoming the hostilities that took place between groups during the war.

#### 1. The villages of Majdel Meouch<sup>253</sup> and Kfarniss<sup>254</sup>

These two villages are located on the peak of a steep mountain, and to reach them one must traverse up a harrowing one-lane road. The Pontifical Mission is currently working in both villages, though the YMCA, Mercy Corps and the UNDP have all also initiated programmes here. I met with a man named Najib Adwan upon my arrival, as he was the local Pontifical Mission contact and wanted to explain the Mission's development projects and programmes there. He said that the Pontifical Mission had begun working in this area six years prior and that their first project was repairing the drinking water system. They also renovated the school, built a clinic and provided 70 per cent of the medical equipment for it.

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<sup>253</sup> I interviewed at least 20 people from this village, including two group interviews with approximately six people present.

Then three years ago they shifted to agriculture and began fixing the irrigation systems, canals and roads. They are also going to deal with the sewage problem and they are currently building a factory for animal feed. He added that the Mission was also giving small loans to farmers. Moreover, this was another UNDP "model development village".

Pontifical Mission's feed factory in Majdel Meouch



After interviewing several of the locals, I discovered that Nagib Adwan—the Pontifical Mission's main contact in the village—was the nephew of a very powerful Maronite Monsignor, who was also from this village. The locals were angry and bitter and felt that the 'development' that had been done in their village was tainted with patronage and *wasta*, as it appeared that all of the

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<sup>254</sup> I interviewed around six people from this village. Four men were interviewed in a group.

development projects that took place in this village had to first pass through Nagib Adwan.

Yes I have heard of the Pontifical Mission. They have done a feed factory...you can apply for agricultural equipment and stuff, but you need *wasta*! Nothing works without *wasta* here.<sup>255</sup>

The PM doesn't work with a co-operative or the municipality in this village, but it works with a certain person from the village. Nagib Adwan. He's the nephew of the Monsignor.<sup>256</sup>

If you want to buy a tractor, you have to go to Nagib to apply.<sup>257</sup>

I am saying the truth and even if I am to be slaughtered in order to find the truth—this is the truth of the village. To be sure, all projects that are going on here, Nagib is the only one who is monitoring all of these projects—and he is the only one that the PM is dealing with.<sup>258</sup>

Work is being done here, but it is restricted to one person.<sup>259</sup>

Nagib doesn't get paid, but if he can contract a person for \$2000 and get a contractor for \$1,500 then of course he is not going to refuse and this way he will get money.<sup>260</sup>

People like one person to be popular and so this is probably why his uncle wants him to be popular regardless of his education or condition.<sup>261</sup>

It is not like the people to complain here, but we went down to the offices to hand our loan application to the Pontifical Mission and the Pontifical Mission told us that we had to deal with one person: Nagib Adwan.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>255</sup>Assad: married adult man, farmer, engineer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>256</sup>Tony: married adult man, factory worker, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>257</sup>George: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>258</sup>Amine: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>259</sup>Rania: married adult woman, housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>260</sup>George: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>261</sup>Georgette: married adult woman, housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>262</sup>Assad: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

Most of the workers were from this village through *wasta* and there was a Monsignor who got his nephew to monitor and do all of the work. There is no committee established in this village.<sup>263</sup>

This does not mean that the villagers believed that no development had taken place here. Quite the contrary, most were very pleased with the projects that had been done, and many said that 99 per cent of all people in the village have benefited from the work of the Pontifical Mission. It was not what had been done, but distinctly how the development programme had taken place that disappointed the people in the village.

Pontifical Mission's irrigation canal in Majdel Meouch



The farmers here also complained about the government's lack of dedication to seeing them return to their homes. Walid Jumblatt as the head of

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<sup>263</sup>Mary: married adult woman, housewife, individual interview, 1998.

the Ministry of the Displaced was in charge of distributing money for house reparations. However, the funds had been frozen and he was unable to give the locals the full amount of their checks. The government first paid the Druze squatters to leave the houses and then they paid or were supposed to pay the Christian families to rebuild or repair their houses. Farmers spoke of corruption on all sides and many believed that because they did not have *wasta*, they were not able to collect the money that was rightfully theirs.

Most importantly, like in every other rural village, the farmers spoke of the government's negligence of agricultural development. Most of the farmers in this town were elderly. It seems that the majority of people left the area due the war and only return for summer holidays. People spoke of the lush vegetables and fruits that they used to produce here, and continue to painstakingly maintain terraces that have been a part of this village for centuries.



Terrace farmer in Majdel Meouch

For example before the war I used to make from agriculture:

5,000 USD from olives

4,000 USD from tomatoes

3,000 USD from apples

On average I used to make about \$12,000 per year.

Before the war I once made 70,000 LL (\$23,333)<sup>264</sup> and my son was so tempted by this that he wanted to start his own farm. Now if I beg him to come and help me, he won't. It's just not feasible.<sup>265</sup>

Why am I not planting this year? No market. Well it hurts me morally because I am not planting this year. Land is the soul and if you can't feed it, then it will die. It's the same if you don't feed and take care of a child, he will die.<sup>266</sup>

This year I didn't plant because there is no market here and then I will have to take the produce to Beirut and there they will waste it.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>264</sup>The exchange rate before the war was 3LL to \$1.00

<sup>265</sup>Ilyas: married elderly man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>266</sup>George: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>267</sup>Assad: married adult man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

Once an Armenian farmer was on his donkey and he came to see me. So the man saw me on my land working and he simply told me that his donkey's situation is better than his.<sup>268</sup>

The situation for farmers is very bad because there is no protection and no guarantees. You plant and then there is no marketing and your produce stays here and rots.<sup>269</sup>

The situation in Kfarniss was slightly different when it came to the Pontifical Mission. According to the people that I met, the Pontifical Mission was meeting the expectations of the locals. It was the YMCA that some complained about. It seems that the YMCA made some loans to the farmers in order to help them restore their agricultural livelihoods. Most, instead of investing the loan in agriculture, used the money to rebuild their houses, thinking that when they got their allotted money from the government they would use it to pay back the YMCA. Unfortunately, the government did not pay most of these people their reconstruction payment until a year later, and the YMCA foreclosed on the loans and was suing some of the farmers.

The Pontifical Mission is the only one looking out for us for the past two years. Though Caritas has given us money for renovations.<sup>270</sup>

The Pontifical Mission interest is in agricultural development projects, which is encouraging people to stay.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup>Illyas: married elderly man, farmer, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>269</sup>Gerogette: married adult woman, housewife, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>270</sup>Amine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>271</sup>Shahine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

The Pontifical Mission is also doing an irrigation program. In winter they brought us 6000 fruit plants.<sup>272</sup>

Caritas and YMCA have also helped this village.<sup>273</sup>

The YMCA gives loans... for example, it gives a person \$5000 with a symbolic interest of 9% for those who want to do small jobs. Around 25 people from this village got loans. This year it is hard to get loans, because the people who got loans from the YMCA were expecting to return it by getting the promised money from the government (Money for house reconstruction) and so this is why it is hard to get loans. They couldn't pay it back.<sup>274</sup>

The YMCA started suing people for the return of the loans! Damn the YMCA!<sup>275</sup>

The PM gave us pipes 6 inches wide costing \$23,000 and gave us \$3000 for labour. The mission brings the equipment and we provide the labour and we complete the project.<sup>276</sup>

Now the PM is going to give us an agricultural tractor costing \$18,000. But there is a problem—who is going to receive this tractor—the municipality or the co-operative?<sup>277</sup>

The mission is also studying a project of sewerage treatment, which will cost \$100,000.<sup>278</sup>

(group of farmers)

The PM came directly after the displaced people returned to their area. The PM came and asked us about our needs. They came to this place, Kfarniss because it was an absolute disaster.<sup>279</sup>

Caritas gave each household \$1000 and some others an extra \$2000. The YMCA also helped, they gave loans.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>272</sup>Maroun: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>273</sup>Joseph: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>274</sup>Shahine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>275</sup>Amine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>276</sup>Joseph: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>277</sup>Maroun: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>278</sup>Amine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>279</sup>Shahine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>280</sup>Joseph: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

The YMCA didn't help, don't say that! They are suing us!<sup>281</sup>

(2 people disagree) No they helped.<sup>282</sup>

There was a co-operative that was behind it, they were capitalists who worked so hard and collected a lot of money to help the village.<sup>283</sup>

And who was behind them? Behind the co-operative is the YMCA!<sup>284</sup>

The UNDP gave \$80,000 to Majdel Meouch to do some agricultural developments, the *wasta* is big there.<sup>285</sup>

No. The PM is the only one looking out for us.<sup>286</sup>

YMCA did irrigation canals in Majdel Meouch and the UNDP spent \$80,000 there. They called it a model village and invited the American Ambassador there. This is not right. It's all about influence.<sup>287</sup>

## **J. Summary of Findings**

This region, the Shuf, was the site of brutal Christian—Druze massacres in 1983, which have left the region marked with numerous demolished and depopulated, mostly Christian, villages. The organisations working here must, in many cases, start from scratch rebuilding the foundations of destroyed homes and roads. Before attempting to work here, all organisations must pay a visit to the patron of the mountain, Walid Jumblatt. He represents the historical tie of the locals to this

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<sup>281</sup>Amine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>282</sup>Joseph and Farid: married adult men, farmers, group interview, 1998.

<sup>283</sup>Kamal: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>284</sup>Joseph: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

<sup>285</sup>Michel: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

land and his patronage is unquestionably needed for the success of any project in the Shuf.

Though the Pontifical Mission expended a huge amount of money, time and resources over the years rebuilding the village of Majdel Meouch, the way that it was done angered and disappointed the local men and women. The extensive and flagrant use of patronage via the INGO, the local Monsignor and his nephew has left local people feeling very dissatisfied with the work of the Pontifical Mission. Local participation in this project was nearly non-existent.

In Kfarniss, the locals believed that the Pontifical Mission was the only organisation that cared about them and they complained about the YMCA, and the fact that this organisations was suing them because they had failed to pay back loans.

This chapter elucidated my fieldwork utilising the voices of local men and women concerning their views and understandings of the development work taking place in their particular villages and regions. As was shown by my fieldwork, many things coalesce around the objectives of INGOs, however, one of the most important components on the ground is the INGOs choice of field

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<sup>286</sup>Amine: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

officer. This person is the link between the local villagers and the organisation. He/she represents the organisation and its agenda to the 'beneficiaries' on all fronts. Who the INGOs choose to represent them and the way this person implements development programmes/projects on the ground is of crucial significance to the overall opinion of the work. Many local men and women did not know the exact name of the INGO working in their area, but they almost always knew the INGO field officer's name.

The following chapter also includes local men and women's voices, but it will be mostly devoted to looking more closely at the relationships between the other main actors in the development scene; the State, donors and INGOs. This is done in an attempt to present a fuller picture of the development apparatus so that a more accurate analysis of the system can be achieved.

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<sup>287</sup>Farid: married adult man, farmer, group interview, 1998.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **ANALYSIS of INGO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES in RURAL AREAS of LEBANON: obstacles, constraints and realities**

*Whose Development is it anyway?*

Kingston Kajese<sup>1</sup>

This chapter will explore the main actors involved in rural development in Lebanon (the state, non-state political actors, INGO's, donors, and beneficiaries). It will dig deeper into the development process in order to discover some of the obstacles and constraints that may keep INGOs from meeting the needs of local men and women. It will also investigate whether these obstacles and constraints also keep them from meeting their own stated goals. Initially, it will look at the relationship between INGOs, and the State specifically examining INGO-state coordination, regional political constraints, and domestic constraints focusing on local politics, and confessionalism. Within this section, the context in which INGOs form patron-client relationships with powerful Lebanese figures will also be inspected. The second section of this chapter will examine the salient themes in the connection between donor agendas, INGOs, and the actual projects. It will

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<sup>1</sup> Kingston Kajese b., cited in Haskell Ward (1989: 97).

pay particular attention to the work of USAID, as this donor funded four of the seven INGOs included in my project and maintained an office in Lebanon. Then I will move on to the INGOs' work on the ground, covering issues like transparency, accountability, and sustainability.

Finally, I will look at the beneficiaries' level of participation, especially women. I will also include a section that dwells on beneficiaries' access to INGO's projects and programmes according to need. It is important to note that my fieldwork data is used as a basic framework for most of the arguments and analyses included in this chapter. It is important to note that these conclusions are drawn very specifically from my fieldwork and are not necessarily applicable to INGO universally.

### **A. Domestic Obstacles: INGOs, non-state political actors, the state and Development**

We thank the government. What can we give it more? The government is made of the people. We are the government. The gangs are there true, but if we don't do anything about it...well. I mean if we didn't do the same, then we could have a good government.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Halabi: married, adult man, shop owner, individual interview, 1998.

There are historical, political and socio-economic contexts that influence the INGO-state relationships. INGOs are 'organisations of human agents which themselves have identities, objectives, and above all, social histories.' (Farrington and Bebbington (1993: 42). These histories and objectives may or may not coincide with a committed partnership with the government. Some organisations are more pragmatic and economic whilst others are essentially political. The *raison d'être* of the organisation, in many cases, influences the type of people who work for the organisation and the stance that it takes concerning the government, as well as its approach to working with the poor. Esman and Uphoff (1984: 267) state that 'whether and under what circumstances a particular organization should relate to government or avoid government is a major strategic decision'.

Historically, voluntary organisations have operated quite freely in Lebanon. This freedom was greatly extended during the war (1975-1990) due to the near complete collapse of the state and the great surge of funds that INGOs (both local and international, but especially international) received from abroad. There was little call for accountability and transparency as it was an emergency situation. It is true that during the war INGOs helped distribute large amounts of

aid and have been credited with helping to hold the society together. Likewise, it is also clear that corrupt<sup>3</sup> practices were rampant in certain organisations and many of them established 'mini-kingdoms' in areas where they were working. Although, it has been nearly ten years since the end of the war, many INGO staff are still not accustomed to answering questions concerning their work and/or finances, or establishing partnerships with the government, or each other for that matter. One field staff worker put it this way, 'During the war, a lot of NGOs behaved like militias. There was no one to tell them no. Today they have to change, but it will take time.'<sup>4</sup> Nowadays the funds that flowed so generously during the war have mostly dried up, and the state is attempting to reclaim lost territory. Many INGOs are feeling the crunch as they attempt reorganise themselves for the future and it is obvious that INGOs in Lebanon are currently undergoing some difficulty in redefining their institutional identity. It is also important to recognise the issue of power in the context of these relationships. The government's policy and politics have a considerable impact on the

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<sup>3</sup> Definitions of corruption are many and varied. They range from simple notions that corruption is the exercise of public power for private gain to more complex econometric analyses that try to measure the impact of corruption. Robert Klitgaard (1998) has suggested that corruption stems from arrangements in which there is a monopoly of power, discretion in how that power is used, and a lack of accountability about its use.

distribution of power and resources in society. The Hariri government's plan for reconstruction and development focused almost exclusively on infrastructure in the urban city centre of Beirut, neglecting the rural areas, as well as social aspects that probably should have been seen as imperative following the civil war.

The inadequacy of past state development programmes in rural areas has been reinforced by current reductions in agricultural funding, lack of co-ordination between the Ministry of Agriculture, the FAO, INGOs and other international organisations working in rural development. This lack of planning and focus serves to exacerbate the hardship experienced by local men and women, who live far from the centre, Beirut. Moreover, there is a considerable waste of resources due to duplication of work, lack of co-ordination, and corruption. All of the respondents complained about lack of water resources<sup>5</sup>, sewage treatment, electricity, medical facilities, public education for their children, agricultural inputs and training, and help in marketing their produce. In many cases, the INGOs provided the only source of assistance or prospect for assistance in the near or

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<sup>4</sup> R. N.: female INGO field officer (she has worked for at least three different INGOs in Lebanon), 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Please note that unlike other countries in the region, Lebanon's water is plentiful, however, this extremely valuable resource is horribly mismanaged.

distant future. One INGO handled the problem of government negligence this way:

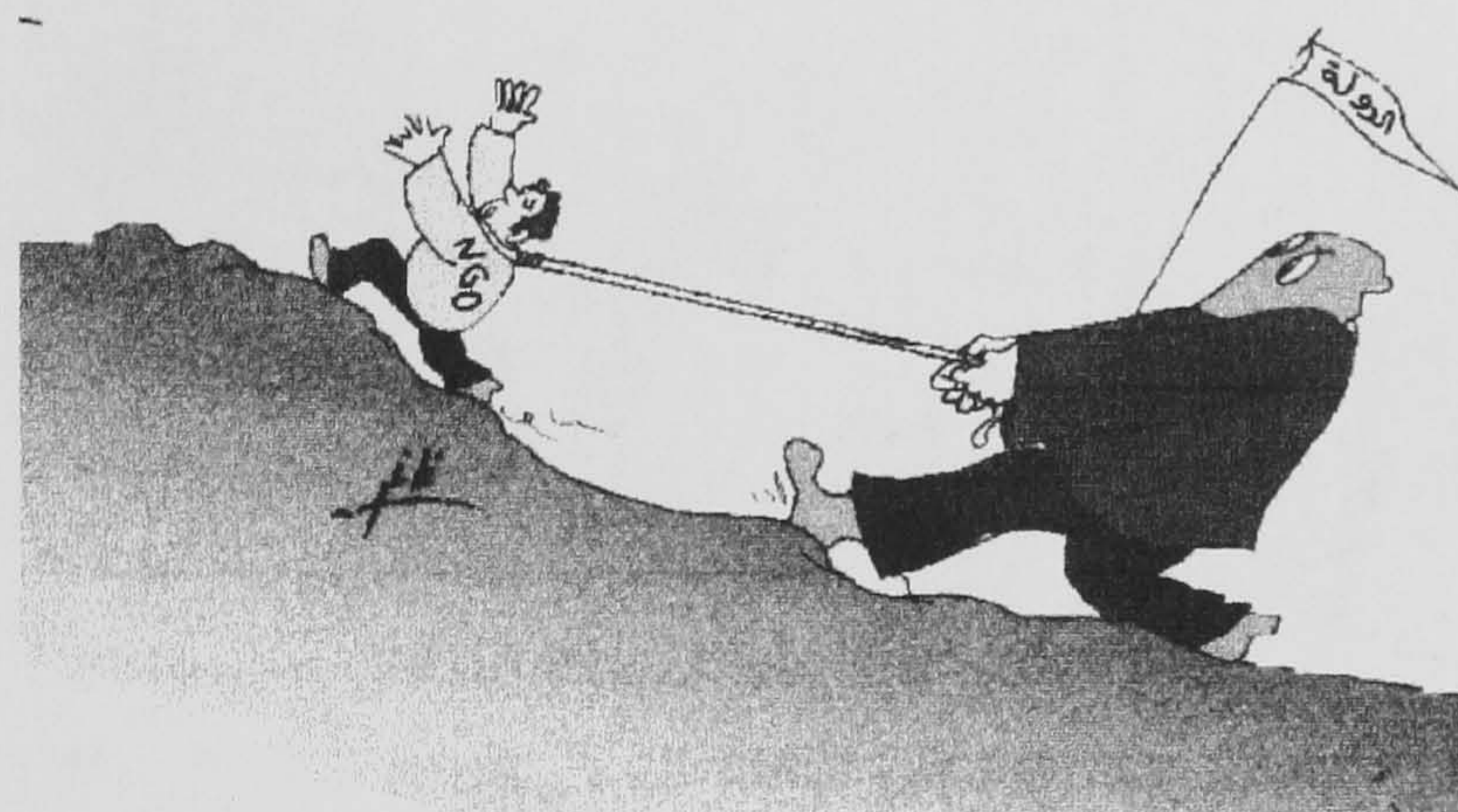
People are so used to complaining about the government not doing this or that for them. The YMCA tells them that it's not a question of sending lists of demands for someone else to fulfil. Instead, we tell them 'you are the government'.<sup>6</sup>

Telling an impoverished farmer that he/she is the government implies that they have some control over most aspects of their lives, which, in most cases, they do not. In fact, they have almost no control over the most simple aspects of their lives, like whether they are going to be able to afford shoes for their children, locate a market for their products, or obtain a license to plant tobacco.

Furthermore, throughout my fieldwork and without exception, the men and women reported that they *do* provide for themselves, and that people in rural areas of Lebanon have been providing for themselves for centuries. What urban dwellers consider and expect as entitlements; water, electricity, roads, sewage treatment, rubbish collection etc... rural people handle for themselves, in nearly all cases working together as a community.

Many domestic impediments to development like the unfair distribution of tobacco licences in the Beka'a, the flagrant corruption regarding the

reconstruction of destroyed homes in the Shuf, the lack of the enforcement of fair marketing practices for agricultural produce, the failure to provide alternative crops following the eradication of hashish cultivation, and the provision of inputs for the agriculture sector are all decisions that require political will from the administration in order to be corrected.



NGOs

The State<sup>7</sup>

### 1. NGO-State Co-ordination

Stepping in when government won't<sup>8</sup>

Co-ordination between the INGOs and the government is very haphazard and fraught with ambiguity from both sides of the relationship.

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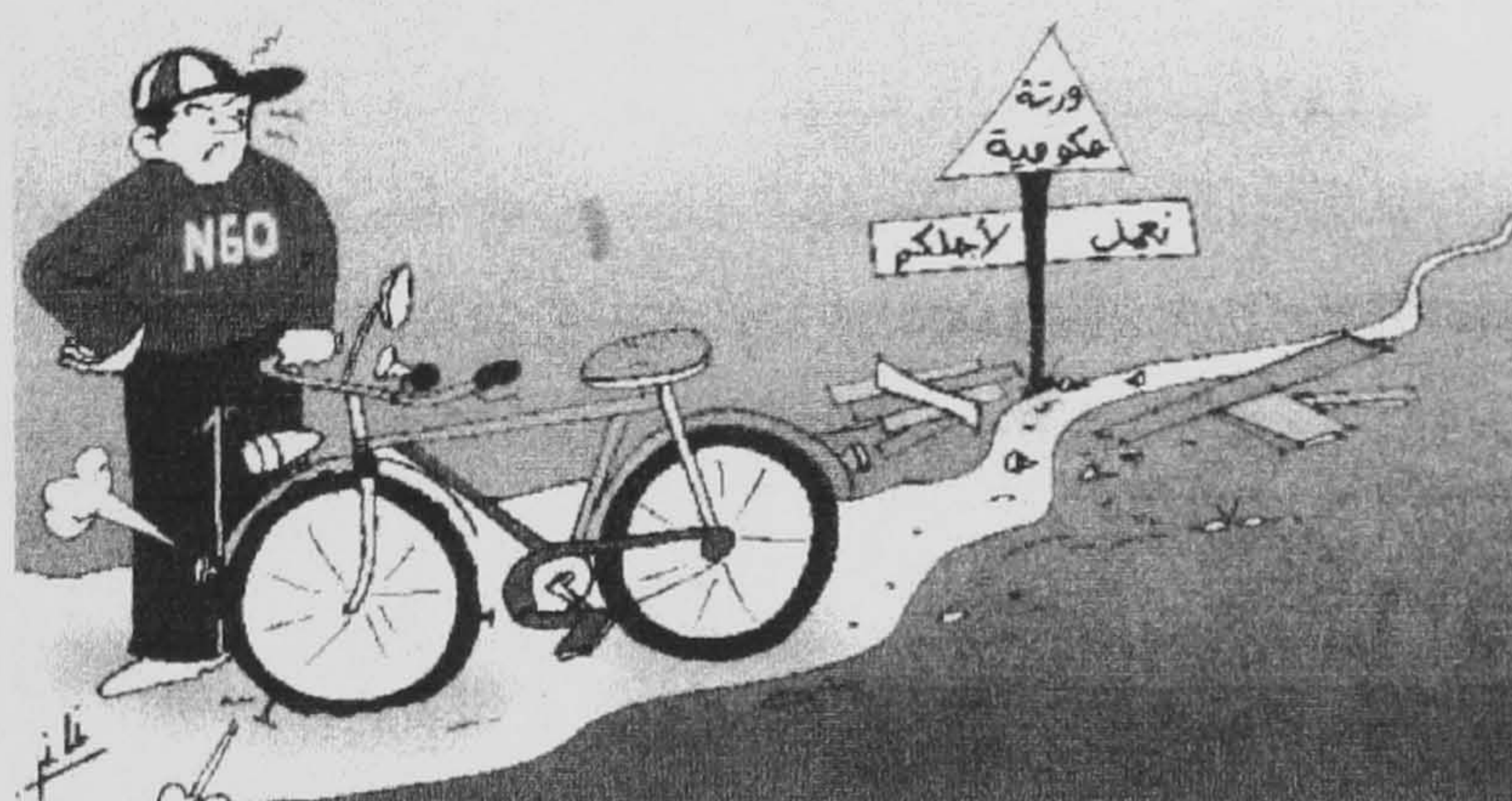
<sup>6</sup> Leyla Mbayed, YMCA quoted in the Daily Star, Wednesday, April 14, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> All cartoons in this chapter were reprinted with the permission of Hurriyat, where they first appeared in No. 9, Fall 1997, by cartoonist Mr. Antoine Ghanem. Michelle Obeid, my field assistant, and myself did the translations for cartoon captions.

<sup>8</sup> Daily Star, Wednesday, April 14, 1999: Commentary on the work of YMCA.

The problem with the government is that government ministers from the area or other interested parties want their names on the projects. They are interested in being elected or re-elected. We want participation. We don't want all of the credit for the project, but we don't want them taking credit for the project. For us, our goal is to do good work and attract more funds for the future.<sup>9</sup>

It is reportedly very difficult for the INGOs to work with the government ministries. All INGO staff complained that the administration is uncooperative, lacking in professionalism and, in many instances, corrupt.



Public construction site: We (the government) work for you

We don't avoid the government. But if we had to ask permission or present all of the papers, we would never get any work done. We try to consult, but we don't always get answers. We do the work. Nobody stops us. If they say no, or wait, or whatever, we don't stop. We do the work and they don't stop us.<sup>10</sup>

The problem is that everyone in the government, every man who has an office acts like a Minister. In Lebanon this is a problem. Everyone sees himself as important.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Jacqueline M.: former INGO field officer, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Rabih: INGO country representative, individual interview, 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Samir: INGO field officer, 1998.

We went to Hobeika<sup>12</sup> with a list of projects. He said yes, yes, yes. Except this certain project, no, because they had done a study and allocated the money for it and they were going to do it. We had to present the same list to some other man in another department, in the same ministry, who said no to all of the projects! He said that their offices were going to do the work. Another man in another department said we could only do the work if we gave him a new proposal that would include specifics on every one metre of ground we dig. He would have had a stack of papers that he would have just put into the drawer and he would have never looked at them. It would take us months to do that kind of work, and it would tie up the staff doing ridiculous paperwork. It would take us one year to do a project that could be done in two weeks.<sup>13</sup>

None of the INGO mission directors or staff had anything positive to say about working with the government. One INGO director went as far as to say, 'The government is a mafia, so sometimes we have to behave like a mafia too.' This should be understood in the context of the current socio-political economy.

Almost all of the people working for the INGOs are Lebanese and part of Lebanese society. It is well known that most of the Lebanese public view the government with disdain.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, their reluctance in dealing with the state apparatus is a rational choice. In the eyes of many Lebanese citizens the government, for the most part, lacks credibility and legitimacy.

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<sup>12</sup> Elie Hobeika was the former minister for Public Works, Electricity and Water. Incidentally, he is also an ex-warlord and the former leader of the Lebanese Forces militia. He was the prime suspect for directing the massacres at the Sabra and Chatila refugee camp.

<sup>13</sup> R. M.: INGO country representative, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Stories of corruption are openly and constantly discussed. Moreover, the country's current economic recession has exacerbated the characteristic level of Lebanese cynicism towards the government.

In agriculture, we have no relationship with the government at all. We are a small organisation that works directly with the people. The government is not interested. In our education programmes, however, yes for the summer courses we need permission. Getting permission depends on *wasta*. It took one day for Kfar Roumane to get the permit. They have a Parliament member from there. One week for Qfarseer, they have someone from the Ministry of Education from there. Zaoutar, it's been one month and a half and still nothing. They have no one. But they started the programme anyway before they got the approval.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Between the State and INGO: Personalities and Patronage

The INGOs are better than the government. *Why?*

Because we haven't tried the government! (everyone laughs)<sup>16</sup>

Some leaders feel that they are guests and if they are not living in the house, then they won't fix it.<sup>17</sup>

John Clark (1997: 47) wrote that 'A healthy NGO-State relationship is only conceivable where both parties share common objectives.' In Lebanon this is definitely lacking. However, though INGOs are fairly autonomous from the state apparatus, the absence of a clear-cut working relationship does not imply that there is *no* relationship with the government executive. Almost all of the INGO executive directors must work under the patronage of someone powerful in the administration. This is especially important if they are working in sensitive, relatively wealthy or influential areas. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement

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<sup>15</sup> Bassam Chamoun/ MCC field officer, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Kfeir Zeitoun: group interview with municipality members, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> Mohammad: single, adult male, painter/electrician, individual interview, 1998.

where an INGO working under the patronage of an MP, Minister, or one of the 'troika' gains the possibility of access to the government apparatus and more power, including the possibility of future government funding, whilst the patron gains the political advantages of 'bringing' development to a particular region or village(s).

If a person doesn't have *wasta* then he will die.<sup>18</sup>

My son is in the Ministry. I express my feelings to him and he conveys this to the Minister or to his contacts, friends, officers, doctors...like that. Every Saturday and Sunday people come here to talk to my son from the village and everywhere.<sup>19</sup>

Other than obtaining patronage and protection from an important government official, they must court the regional and local leaders as well as the remaining powerful landlords. For small-scale education projects or programmes like Save the Children's, where there is very little to gain politically from the project, extensive *wasta* is not needed in most cases. However, in big infrastructure development projects like the ones supported by USAID, an INGO working in the South must have a favourable 'relationship' with Nabih Berri. Likewise, INGOs working in the Shuf must pay their respects and establish a good relationship

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<sup>18</sup> Mohammad N.: married, adult man, farmer from the Hermel, 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Mr. Halabi: married, adult man, farmer from Kfeir, 1998.

with the Druze *za'im*, Walid Jumblatt. In this way, state-INGO relationships are personal and are handled between the elite of both establishments, especially initially. Bratton (1989: 572-6) concludes from his study in Africa that: 'the amount of space allowed NGOs in any given country is determined first and foremost by political considerations, rather than by any calculations of the contributions of NGOs to economic and social development.' Moreover, INGO mission directors have great potential for forging patron-client relationships with powerful people considering the amount of money that they have at their disposal via these projects. In fact, the USAID representative boasted that many of the people who had participated in their projects were elected to the municipalities:

...many of the committee members were later elected to their respective municipal councils because they proved that they could get things done.<sup>20</sup>

By doing projects for influential people in and out of government, especially if this working relationship has been established over a period of time facilitates the work of the INGO and gives them the *wasta* needed in order to bypass regulations or other hindrances that may get in the way of completing a project.

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<sup>20</sup> James "Spike" Stevenson, The Daily Star, Monday, 26 April, 1999, p. 3.

In Jezzine we were planning to dig a well for 25 villages. We had a lawyer and a geologist. It was said that the area where we wanted to dig the well was too close to the previous well. The government in the form of the *darrak* came and said that we shouldn't dig this well. We said okay, so the lawyer investigated and found that in Jezzine a well had to be at least 10 metres from an existing one...the one we were going to dig was only seven metres...and we dug the well anyway. *How?* The head of our INGO has a lot of *wasta* in the government. He has a lot of connections. And in the end he works for his own benefit.<sup>21</sup>

State-INGO relationships are not the whole story. They are complicated by issues of personality and patronage, both with and without the involvement of the state. Whilst this may be conceived of as corruption in as much as formal channels and procedures may be bypassed, they may equally be viewed as an alternative framework for relationships and one that is socially and culturally more authentic.

It is nearly impossible to discuss the vital factors influencing INGO projects for rural development without also speaking about other regional and domestic constraints that influence this process. The regional constraints include the policies and practices of Lebanon's powerful neighbours; Syria and Israel. Domestic constraints are many (some of which are discussed above), but the political parties, patronage and confessionalism stood out in my fieldwork as

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<sup>21</sup> G.F.: former INGO field officer, 1999.

playing a critical role in the overall scheme of rural development, and as a barrier to INGOs meeting the needs of local men and women.

### 3. Regional Pressures

The regional political situation is a significant and persistent obstacle to post-war development in Lebanon. As was shown by my fieldwork, the already difficult lives of people living in the South, the Baalbek-Hermel and Hasbaya are made all the more precarious due to extensive disruption caused by the ongoing conflict with Israel.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, most of the rural areas that I visited suffer from various economic and political pressures brought on by the policies of the two dominant regional actors: Israel and Syria.

Israel's role is fairly straightforward. There is almost no benefit to people living in rural areas from the occupation of Lebanese land, the bombardment of Lebanese territory or the control of Lebanese water sources. The havoc that Israeli actions cause is not somehow compensated for by, for example,

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<sup>22</sup> Please note that my fieldwork was conducted during the latter period of Israeli occupation (1998-1999).

inexpensive medical care or cheap food<sup>23</sup>. Many farmers in the South and the Baalbek-Hermel region did admit that if it were not for sustained Israeli military action, the tobacco subsidies would probably not be as high. However, according to the people that I spoke to, the over-valued tobacco prices were not seen as an equalising measure in compensating them for the continual destruction of property and lives as well as the tension and fear that have become a way of life for them.

Israel's occupation of 10 per cent of rural areas in Lebanon until May 2000 hindered rural development whether by INGOs or the State. Firstly, there was a constant threat of danger presented by the ongoing violence, and there was the unfortunate by-product that many of the infrastructure projects were eventually destroyed.

Syria's role on the other hand seems to be much more ambiguous. On the one hand, enormous imports of cheaper Syrian agricultural products and other goods have proven catastrophic for Lebanese producers. The uncontrolled influx of Syrian labourers willing to work for a fraction of the wages demanded by the

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<sup>23</sup> This statement concerns only those people living outside of the Israeli self-declared security zone. It is possible that people living within the security zone received benefits from the occupation, but at the time of this fieldwork that information was not available.

Lebanese has also increased unemployment among rural people, especially men, who aspire to work on Beirut construction projects or in rural areas as day labourers. The recent cessation of smuggling from Lebanon to Syria and the concomitant increase of smuggled Syrian goods to Lebanon have caused immense economic hardship for the Lebanese living in border areas. Syria's control of water in the Hermel and the ubiquitous presence of the Syrian army and *mokhabarat* in the Beka'a and to a lesser extent in the Akkar demonstrate the powerful intentions of Syria and illustrate well the weakness of the Lebanese state.

Nevertheless, though people do respond bitterly concerning Syrian influence in the country and the hardship that Syrian political and economic policies have caused them, the majority of people living in the border areas expressed a reluctant gratitude for the access that they have to Syrian schools, markets, media<sup>24</sup>, and especially Syrian medical care. I heard it many times

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<sup>24</sup> During my fieldwork I noticed that nearly all of the people in the Akkar (including Wadi Khaled), Baalbek-Hermel and Aarsal watch Syrian television. When I asked them why?, they replied that Syrian shows were more relevant to their lives. They said that they learned things from Syrian television, for instance agricultural and food preservation techniques, and that they didn't learn anything from "Beirut" television. Moreover, it was stated many times that they found the behaviour and way of dress on "Beirut" television vulgar and indecent.

throughout my fieldwork that if it were not for Syria they would be in much worse shape, many expressing that starvation would be a definite possibility.

Syria provides them with an escape hatch from their ignored poverty and lack of Lebanese government interest. I am certain that if it were not for this option, there would be a tremendous amount of instability in these areas, with the best case scenario being violent demonstrations.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4. The Political Parties

Some people who are politically committed will try to convince you that a camel is a sheep.<sup>26</sup>

The power of local political party-militias (Hizbullah and Amal) are an additional obstacle for INGOs working in the Beka'a and the South where these groups are active. It is well known that the military arm of the party-militias could not exist

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<sup>25</sup> In fact, there were demonstrations in 1997 led by Sobhi Tufaili, an ex-leader of Hizbullah. He had intended to lead a hunger march from Baalbek to Beirut in order to draw attention to the conditions of the poor. These sorts of demonstrations are illegal in Lebanon and were closely monitored by the Syrian and Lebanese armies, and in the end the march did not take place. However, thousands of people turned out in support of Sheik Tufaili, many of them farmers.

'As far as I am concerned, I disregard the political intentions and goals of Toufeili, but for me this was the best revolution that ever took place in this area. Usually, it was always Muslim against Muslim or Muslim against Christian or Druze, but this time it was the poor against the government. All they demanded from the government was basic security, at least food and shelter' (Ahmed).

<sup>26</sup> Mohammad: married, adult man, farmer from the Beka'a, 1998.

without the explicit approval and backing of Syria. The INGOs must get approval from the parties to work as well as from the Syrian *mokhabarat* policing the area.

The overwhelming majority of local people that I spoke to resented both of the political parties; Hizbullah and Amal. Not one farmer had anything positive to say about these parties. In fact many stated that these parties were a hindrance to development and their daily lives. Many felt manipulated by these actors, and they looked forward to the day when they would no longer exercise so much power in their areas. According to the people that I spoke to the removal of these parties and their influence lies in the hands of Syria.

There were several instances where the INGOs had to court the political parties in order to establish their projects, and in some cases they avoided working in areas because a particular party forbid them to. This situation was compounded for INGOs normally viewed as 'Christian', like for instance the YMCA. The YMCA's work in the northern Beka'a was a sensitive subject for some members of the parties, due to the perception that the YMCA is a Christian organisation.

## 5. Confessionalism and 'Balanced' Development

The Lebanese political system is based on a confessional balancing act where the constant manoeuvring of a class of political notables that may hold positions based on any combination of land, status, wealth or the direction of violence seek to secure increased levels of power for their sect and themselves. This system relies on the extensive use of patronage, cronyism and nepotism for its survival. It is a fragile system fraught with infighting, back-stabbing and shifting alliances with its ultimate outcome being a weakened Lebanese state. There is little room for the concept of a public good in this system, as it is a zero-sum game where leaders try to accrue as much of the spoils of office to their own areas/region and people for their own political gain. INGOs must work in this system, and they are an important part of the system. Due to the fact that they are distributing or have access to funds that could potentially help a politician or an individual within his community, their business is highly sought after. Likewise, an INGO that perhaps decides to absent itself from the system will find it difficult to work if not impossible.

I should also shed some light on the confessional make-up of Lebanon and how this is translated into the work of the NGOs. This confessional structure influences everything for the work of a local NGO. The entire administration is influenced by this confessional structure in Lebanon. Any organisation in Lebanon that tries to be independent will encounter lots of problems. An organisation that tries to defend its independence will have problems in funding to say the least. For an organisation to function it must be under the umbrella of a certain political figure in other words confessional power. If the organisation is not, there will also be problems in official funding.<sup>27</sup>

One might think that because these NGOs are foreign and have headquarters abroad they may be able to avoid this *modus operandi*, but this is not the case. The INGOs have foreign headquarters, but they are working in Lebanon and are staffed primarily by Lebanese. Moreover, within this climate, an organisation that hopes to get any kind of work done quickly, particularly infrastructure, has to become a part of this tangled web of alliances or else face constant delays and interruptions.

Confessionalism...well this is Lebanon, but you know this doesn't bother me as long as the INGO is working for the poor. Like the Pontifical Mission, it's stated who they work for; Christians. Everyone knows, right. But where they work and the people they work for are poor. Those people are in a very terrible situation. So to me there is no real problem. But when an INGO that typically works for the Christians let's say, but then to win favours with Berri does work in Shi'ite villages in the South, some of them, not even poor villages for sure, they are cities! Nabatiye? How can this be considered rural? The YMCA is doing a \$50,000 water reservoir there, and there already is one!<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Qassim: married, adult man, local NGO worker from Irsal, 1998.

<sup>28</sup> H. Anwar.: INGO field officer, 1998.

In Lebanon, there is a concept of 'balanced' development among government officials, as well as all interested parties. This concept is illustrated by the following scenario: For instance in the Shuf, a mixed Christian/Druze area, the PM's primary focus was geared towards working in destroyed Christian villages. However, they also had to work in Druze villages, even though they were not considered to be in need. This was done in order to maintain this concept of 'balanced' development, which is really just a replica of traditional government policy in rural areas aimed at keeping everyone 'pleased'. This policy forces INGOs to waste resources that could better be utilised according to level of need.

Other than governmental, regional and domestic obstacles, donors also contribute to the overall success or failure of rural development projects and programmes. The following section will attempt to analyse the impact of donor agendas on INGO's work in rural areas of Lebanon.

## B. International Constraints: Donors and Development

*'He who pays the piper calls the tune.'*

Many of the INGOs in my study have been working in Lebanon for a lengthy period of time<sup>29</sup>, they all received a great bulk or all of their funding from foreign sources, and their head offices are all located in North America or Europe. As stated in Chapter One of this work, donors usually choose to work with INGOs/NGOs because these organisations are positively distinguished from the state, due to their assumed closer ties with local people, and hence their supposed ability to manage projects which include enhanced local participation, and because of their perceived cost-efficiency, flexibility, innovation as well as their reputed effectiveness in completing projects in a timely manner.

Speed in implementing the projects is of the essence. Funding needs to be dispersed quickly; otherwise the money goes back to USAID. That's why the decision-making process at the YMCA has to be quick and efficient.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The only exceptions were Creative Associates and CHF, which came on the back of USAID funding. Creative Associates was not a subject of my study, because they were late in getting started in Lebanon, however they were a part of the USAID programme and were constantly referred to by INGO personnel and local men and women during my field study.

<sup>30</sup> Leyla Mbayed, Integrated Rural development Program Director for the YMCA, quoted in the Daily Star, Wednesday, April 14, 1999.

## 1. Donor Agendas: USAID

The questions that this section will address are: Do the objectives of donors, INGOs and local people match? Do donor objectives and agendas facilitate or impede the work of INGOs in meeting the needs of local men and women who are the intended 'beneficiaries' of their aid money?

In March 1994, USAID's *Strategy for Sustainable Development* established objectives for aid such as protecting the environment, stabilising world population growth, and encouraging broad based economic growth. A fourth category, entitled 'building democracy', called for 'the provision of assistance to countries that have recently emerged or are in the process of emerging as democratic societies; have recently emerged or are emerging from civil strife; or where democratic progress or institutions are threatened (p. 2).'

Lebanon was chosen for US foreign aid based on pledges made at the Friends of Lebanon Conference, which grew out of US concerns raised by the Israeli Grapes of Wrath attacks on the country in April, 1996. Prior to these attacks, US assistance was being phased out.

The hostilities served as a reminder that Lebanon plays an important role in the achievement of regional peace, and that its continued recovery from civil war and regional conflict is fragile (USAID 1998: 4).

This section focuses primarily, though not absolutely, on USAID because it was the only donor agency that maintained an office in Lebanon. Moreover, it was seen as being highly involved with the oversight of projects done in their name via the North American INGOs, which were a part of this project.

The USAID representative in Lebanon was very clear about why USAID was here. He said that they were working in the country because of Lebanon's strategic importance for the security and stability of the region. To him that did not imply that development work could not be performed, on the contrary, it could, but it clearly was not the first priority of USAID.

The reason USAID wants to increase the program is because of Lebanon's crucial importance to regional stability. "Lebanon can be an economic entrepôt for the region. It could play the same role in the region that Amsterdam or Brussels or Zurich play in Europe. But that all depends on peace and stability and open borders and that's why we're here."<sup>31</sup>

Importantly, USAID remains subservient to the Department of State and the Congress therefore;

...the fact remains that USAID (1) is a tool of US foreign policy and exists to promote US interests more than to promote development in poor nations; (2) has failed in its professed goal of helping promote self-sustaining economic development in various developing countries; and (3) is essentially a Cold War agency now (or perhaps *still*) in search of continued legitimacy' (Sullivan 1996: 6).

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<sup>31</sup> James Stevenson, quoted in the Daily Star, Friday, September 17, 1999.

One well experienced project field officer argued that even though donors have agendas, this does not particularly mean that the INGO cannot do good work on the ground.

Let's say that USAID has stated their goals and agenda okay. The community has their needs. In order for the local community to have their needs met... the missing element is money. USAID has the money. If the INGO working in the area is good, they can do it. They can satisfy both parties. I mean they can't do everything that the village may need, but they can do a lot. And they can also satisfy USAID in their goals.<sup>32</sup>

We will first look at the initial participation practices and processes in USAID's rural development programme that included choosing which INGOs would receive this quite large sum (\$7 million each) of money for development work. Specifically, what were the criteria, and how were the INGOs that participated and received funds totalling \$7 million each chosen?

The work contracted by USAID is done through a process of 'competitive tenders'. How competitive the tendering was however, is not certain.

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<sup>32</sup> Haytham Annan: adult man, INGO field officer, 1998.

And this selection process of USAID for the clusters...well beside the point of why the INGOs chose the clusters that they chose, why were the INGOs they chose chosen in the first place? Maybe USAID didn't want the best because then the best will ask questions that they aren't prepared to answer. Moreover, they didn't give any money to local NGOs. I heard that they were saying that local NGOs don't have the capacity that they weren't professional, that they were corrupt. This is simply not true! In many cases, there is no difference between these organisations, and the local ones are even better, because they have been doing this for a long time. They have been working with the locals and they are closer to the grassroots organisations too. But USAID prefers to support Creative Associates! What is this? <sup>33</sup>

From the beginning the criteria appear dubious. Except for references that the INGO should be North American based and associated with a local representative in Lebanon; capacity, experience and staff qualifications all seemed to be quite varied. The only INGO that had the staff, experience and capacity for the work was the YMCA, which has been working in development for over 100 years in Lebanon. Mercy Corps was highly understaffed and the head of the office was living in the Caucasus during most of the period under consideration. CHF is an organisation that was 'imported' from the U.S. along with Creative Associates, an organisation that is not even an INGO, but a for-profit corporation. Creative Associates and CHF are both based in the Washington D.C. area and are heavily dependent on federal funds for their operations. Creative Associates and CHF were also involved in the USAID pilot

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<sup>33</sup> H. Anwar: adult man, INGO field officer, 1999.

cluster programme in El Salvador. These two organisations in particular have received much criticism in the Lebanese development community and I suspect that the head of the USAID programme in Lebanon had little choice in granting them funds to work here.<sup>34</sup> It is also important to note that there is something called the 'audited overhead rate'<sup>35</sup> for the North American INGOs getting money from USAID in which a percentage, '15-36 percent', of each tranche of the funds is transferred to the home office in the U.S. as overhead running costs. So out of \$1 million dollars the lowest being 15 percent comes to \$150,000 being sent to the U.S. every year during the funding period. The total funding is \$7 million so that would equal \$1,050,000 in total over five years. If in fact it is true that one of the organisations must return 36 percent that comes to \$2,520,000 over a five-year period. This represents nearly one third of the original funding, and not an insignificant amount of money, especially considering that it is just one out of hundreds of ongoing USAID projects.

The last part of this chapter's field analysis will look at the outcome of actual projects and programmes through the eyes of beneficiaries. It will focus on

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<sup>34</sup> USAID struggles to get their budgets passed through a conservative Republican Congress every year. Notably, in order to get their funding they typically report to Congress that 80 percent of AID money gets returned to the United States.

<sup>35</sup> I was told by a USAID official that this rate is periodically reviewed, 1999.

issues like transparency, accountability, sustainability and levels of participation.

This is done in order to illuminate critical INGO practices on the ground that may or may not contribute to these organisations meeting the needs of local men and women.

### **C. INGOs and ‘Beneficiaries’: the realities of development**

Most organisations...they get trees, they plant them and that’s it. They leave. But I believe that this should be a part of a bigger project, which includes: assessment, investment, follow-up and marketing.<sup>36</sup>

Look, if there was any true and actual rural development going on, it could be observed by now. So I would say that what is going on is not true development, but something much more haphazard.<sup>37</sup>

#### **1. Accountability of INGOs and Sustainability of Projects**

Believe me, in Lebanon, with NGOs, there is no accountability.<sup>38</sup>

A lot of organisations have already prepared projects. I mean look at it this way...if you have a shirt that could fit anyone, it’s not made for you, you would have to break your arm or your shoulder to make it fit. This is what it’s like for the local people trying to manage these programmes that simply were not designed with the locals in mind.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Kassem: married, adult man, local NGO worker, 1998.

<sup>37</sup> Abed: single, adult man, INGO field officer, 1998.

<sup>38</sup> L.M. adult female, long-time INGO field officer, 1998

<sup>39</sup> Kassem: adult man, local NGO field worker, 1998.

The 'problem of accountability' has been an ongoing debate within the realm of development practitioners working with NGOs (Moore and Stewart 1998). Who are these organisations accountable to? How do multiple accountabilities encumber autonomy (Biggs and Neame 1996)? The World Bank states that ultimately it is the civic constituency these organisations are accountable to (World Bank 1997). However, most INGOs do not have a civic constituency and are more likely to be accountable to their donors. Fox and Brown (1998) argue that in order for NGOs to be considered credible and legitimate, they must include "downward accountability".

Accountability cannot be disentangled from the socio-political and economic relations of power between the most salient actors; the INGOs, donors, the government as well as the local men and women, who are the weakest link in the chain. In an interview for the Daily Star, USAID mission director, James "Spike" Stevenson told reporters that if the local people do not co-operate then the INGOs have the right to just pull out.

If we don't get cooperation, the NGOs know they can pull out and we can put resources somewhere else. We are willing to work with them but they have to be willing to work with us.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Daily Star, Monday, 26 April 1999.

What does 'willing to work with us' entail? Either make the conditions easy and do what we want, or forget it. Do local communities have the same power? Do local people have the right to choose which INGO they want to work in their village? In my fieldwork I found that they did not. For example, the people from the village of Ras Baalbek in the Beka'a did not want to work with CHF? They preferred to work with the YMCA. USAID told them that if they wanted to be a part of the programme then they had to work with CHF or forget it. The men and women working for the local NGO in Aarsal also did not want to work with CHF, they felt that CHF was not the best INGO for Aarsal. They claimed that the organisation was working with the influential people in the village, who were friends of the field officer, and not working with the local NGOs. They specifically did not want an agricultural road. They argued that it was not one of the village's priorities and moreover no one had been consulted. However, it was discovered that some of the locals did pay 30 percent of the total cost, which was approximately \$10,000. The local Aarsal NGO complained that the same people, who were working for CHF had worked for another INGO some years previously and they constructed another agricultural road in Aarsal that was now impassable. The locals had also paid for that road. The men and women had no recourse as

the INGO had pulled out and there was no accountability. USAID refused to hear their complaints and in the end, CHF built the agriculture road.

The main leverage a country has over an INGO is a refusal of access to its territory. The same could apply to a village where the “resources” are people, powerful people. If a village is home to powerful people or a powerful person then the village has leverage and the INGO and/or USAID will try to work out whatever difficulties that may arise. However, if the village has no *wasta* or very little, then there is little motivation for the INGO or the donor to persevere through the process of consultation and partnership building. For example, Fakiha was seen as an important village because it has a high proportion of ‘professionals’ and is a comparatively wealthy village in the Baalbek-Hermel area, ‘because they have opened to Syria and the countries wanting hashish during the war.’<sup>41</sup> ‘They have a doctor, engineer and an officer in every house.’<sup>42</sup> I was told during my fieldwork that there was a lot of competition for this village and although the YMCA had been designated to work there, CHF was also starting projects in same the village, which was against USAID regulations.

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<sup>41</sup> Nazih: married, adult man, farmer from the Beka’a, 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Ahmed: married, adult man, farmer from the Beka’a, 1998.

When I asked the local people who they would turn to if there should be a problem with the work of the INGO, most were confused and did not know what they would do. Many reported being intimidated about going to Beirut let alone walking into INGO or USAID offices to complain about an employee or the work of the organisation. This is doubly true for people who live in a village setting. No one wants to be seen as being responsible for losing any sort of help for the village.

At this juncture, I would like to review several village case- studies in order to examine closely the question of accountability to the local people. The first village I would like to look at is Bkerzala. The men and women of Bkerzala contributed 30 percent of the total cost (\$100,000-\$150,000) for the sewage treatment facility project done by Mercy Corps International.

Importantly, many local people were confused as to who was to be responsible for the project if something went wrong now or in the future when the INGO pulled out. It was clear from my interviews with a representative from the Ministry of Public Works that the government would not take responsibility if something should go wrong and that they would not work in villages where the INGOs were working. This makes for sort of a conundrum, because let's suppose

that in village A, an INGO is installing a sewage treatment facility and the villagers are paying 30% cash for the project, but in village B the government is doing the same project and the villagers are not paying because by all rights this is supposed to be something that a government does for its citizens; an entitlement. In the future, if the INGO sewage treatment facility should need maintenance, the government claims not to be responsible. Geoff Wood (1997:81) asks an essential question:

To what extent do citizens lose basic political rights if the delivery of universal services and entitlements is entrusted to non-state bodies, which would at best only be accountable to the state (or donors) rather than directly to those with service entitlements?

To this he answers that the 'principle of sub-contracting disperses both responsibility and the process of accountability' (ibid. :83).

In the case of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) working in Zaoutar, the villagers, without exception, were furious at the way the organisation had handled its work. However, none of them had approached the INGO. There were different reasons for this reluctance. Some seemed to think that because it was a foreign organisation, although the field officer was Lebanese, that it was impossible for them to complain. Many villagers thought that it was the duty of the INGO to come to the village and talk to the local people so that they would be

better informed about what was going on. Many felt powerless to complain to the organisation, which was in actual fact giving away charity. They also felt intimidated by the factors of power that inevitably arise in any situation where people of a lower socio-economic status have to approach those they perceive as having a higher status. These factors are compounded in situations where people feel the urge to complain about powerful people that could affect their daily lives, especially when there are nuances of mismanagement involved.

In the case of Oxfam, the head office in Oxford decided on short notice to close the Lebanon office without ensuring the continuation of their programmes and without conducting a final overall evaluation of their years of work in the country. The local staff requested that they should conduct an evaluation and the ongoing programmes should be supported, but to no avail. Importantly, the head office in the UK ordered that all documents, including all past evaluations be shredded. In essence, years of work and information were destroyed. Who is Oxfam accountable to? What happens to dedicated local staff, who had been working with an organisation for years but when the politics of the head office suddenly changed they found themselves out of a job? If Oxfam does not show accountability towards its staff members, then one could draw the conclusion that

this lack of accountability will be transferred to the men and women in rural areas, which it was.

In the Shuf, the Pontifical Mission's patronage of a powerful Monsignor has left a very negative impression of the organisation with the local people. Although, they are pleased with the amount of work that has been done in their village by this organisation (and others), the way it was executed has caused bitterness and hostility towards the nephew of the Monsignor as well as the INGO. I asked one farmer if he had thought about complaining, and as it turned out he had gone to the Pontifical Mission's office, but once there failed to complain about the politics of the development in the village, because he wanted to apply for a small agricultural loan. They told him to go see Najib Adwan, the nephew of the Monsignor, and in the end his loan application was refused. He said that he regretted not saying anything, but that 'talking about it' would have been worse for him, due to the power politics of the village and the need for *wasta* if something should happen to him or a member of his family.

Current and former employees from World Vision heard that I was doing this work and several of them asked to speak with me. They were particularly distressed about the work of this organisation. Many said that there was very little

being done and one man said that he spent all of his time writing fake letters to child sponsors in Europe and North America.

I am a liar, positively a liar. I used to write letters and cards saying that, 'because of you this child will be able to eat figs, because of you he is going to school, probably the kid was in the street. I feel terrible for what I have done. And they all are doing it there. Keep this in mind, all of this is in the name of God.<sup>43</sup>

We used to call ourselves postmen. Big job right! Just getting letters from the kids and sending them. Wow! Development!<sup>44</sup>

We asked him why are you forcing us to do this? It takes too much time and it doesn't deliver enough money. The yearly budget for World Vision in Lebanon is no less than \$1 million. It's the sponsor-a-child-programme. Each sponsor pays \$250 per year that is supposed to go to the child, but this is not what happens. First the money goes to the International office, then to the Geneva office and then it gets to Lebanon, which ends up being less than \$50 per child. Tuition fees in this country are 1,000,000 LL (\$ 670 or £447).<sup>45</sup>

Another problem at this office seems to be the insistence on staff becoming "reborn" or "rebaptised".

The staff has changed so much. Since 1984 at least 12 persons have gone and most of them forced by the executive director. Why? Because you get so long to convert and if you don't get rebaptised, then eventually you will find yourself out of a job.<sup>46</sup>

He had a problem with me. He told me it is difficult for you to work here because you are Catholic, and we are helping a lot of Catholics in Lebanon. He didn't like me, maybe because I am not baptised as a new born.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> G.M.: adult man, former INGO field officer, 1999.

<sup>44</sup> J.N.: adult female, former INGO field officer, 1999.

<sup>45</sup> George: adult man, NGO field officer, 1998.

<sup>46</sup> Irene: adult female, INGO field officer, 1999.

<sup>47</sup> George: adult man, INGO field officer, 1998.

Obviously, this programme brings up serious questions of accountability.<sup>48</sup> CHF and Creative Associates<sup>49</sup> are organisations that have come to work in Lebanon as long as there is USAID money and then they will leave without looking back. Many of the villagers have contributed cash towards projects done by these two INGOs, and many of the farmers they are working with are from the poorest regions in the country. What kind of long-term accountability can these two organisations provide local people, who in many cases scraped together what little funds they had and in some cases borrowed money or had their *children* work to pay for the projects. If something should go wrong, who will worry about them? They call the local men and women, clients, in other words: customers. Customers should have some kind of guarantee or rights. But that is not the way they work. They turn the whole process around, by claiming that the people 'own the project' because they paid for part of it with cash or labour. This relinquishes them of any responsibility once the project is completed.

Moreover, if the villagers have a problem with the local field officer, which was the case in many villages, who do they speak to? How can they complain?

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<sup>48</sup> The executive director has been replaced by World Vision, and hopefully this situation has been corrected.

<sup>49</sup> Creative Associates is not an NGO, but a for-profit company.

When an INGO hires the man who 'owns the village' to oversee their projects, as in Wadi Khaled, there can be no higher reference for complaints. The project field officer is their only link to the organisation, for many the only one they are aware of, so all complaints—if someone has the courage to file one—will end up with the field officer, who is the limiting factor for all comments and feedback.

The YMCA's canning programme on the surface seems like an achievement for women, however these types of programmes are notorious for failure since they must compete with dozens of international brands, many at cheaper prices. I myself saw rooms of boxes filled with jars of home-made jam waiting to be marketed by local women, who had very high hopes. Some women took their products to a city exhibit in Beirut and were not able to sell one single jar of their jam. The YMCA's programme objectives were short-term, did not include quality control, or a well-studied pre-manufacturing marketing plan. Who will be accountable to these women who will most likely not be able depend on a losing business?

Save the Children's programme in the villages of Siddiquine and Recheknanay were considered to be very successful by the local men and women. However, they pointed out that eventually the INGO was going to pull

out and that this programme was supposed to be sustainable on its own. The majority of residents and participants felt that this programme would not be sustainable without Save's oversight, and they feared that the absence of the INGO would inevitably mean the end of the programme.

Other than a few power brokers, INGOs were clearly not accountable to the local people. This could work as a safety net for local villages with powerful *wasta*. If something should go wrong, at least there is a hope that the INGO could be held accountable through the existing patron-client relationship. If a village has no one particularly powerful, then there is almost no accountability. The village in Bajaa' is a good example. The link to the INGO in this village is a school principal. He has a nice villa, separate from the village. However, his power is limited, as he has no strong contacts with the government or religious clerics. Therefore, Mercy Corps can try to force the locals to utilise agriculture land for the school, and they can also walk away from the village without doing the project with little or no concern that anyone powerful will object. This would be unthinkable in a village with a powerful patron.

In summary, INGOs working in Lebanon are not accountable to local people, and in some cases seem to be accountable only to the donors.

Moreover, the entire mechanism is set up that way when a donor organisation repeatedly promotes the speed of implementation:

Randolph and Stevenson believe that the key to USAID's success is the speed with which projects are implemented. "We can generally develop a project and complete it in a matter of three months".<sup>50</sup>

It should be little wonder why the INGOs do not feel accountable to the locals in this case. They simply do not have the time. Cost-effectiveness, rapid disbursement of funds and fast work on the ground upsets few and provides ample opportunities for public relations. INGOs must spend each tranche within the year, or they will not get funding the next year. Pressure to spend quickly forces these organisations to spread their human resources very thin, purchase capital equipment, typically from the donor's country of origin, and put as much funding as possible into infrastructure.

Hulme and Edwards argue that accepting money from donors like USAID or others entail much more than simple accounting. It must be recognised that the influence of utilising such funds goes well beyond simple finance. The acceptance of increased volumes of financial aid involves entering into

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<sup>50</sup> James Stevenson, quoted in the Daily Star, Friday, September 17, 1999.

agreements about what is done, and how it is to be reported and accounted for (1997: 8).

## 2. INGOs and Transparency



**Reporter:** Where does your funding come from?

**Head of NGO:** God is the ultimate 'Donor'

Related to accountability is transparency. The credibility of an organisation is greatly enhanced if its operational procedures are made visible and available. Due to the complex environment that INGOs function in, transparency is greatly missing and is needed in order for them to remain an integral part of the development process (Biggs and Neame 1996, Fowler 1996).

In my work an interesting finding was that the organisations which were getting the bulk of their funding from USAID sources were in most cases more willing to speak to me and seemed to be much more transparent at least about the types of projects and their locations. They had no objections to my speaking

to local people, except for the initial objections of the YMCA.<sup>51</sup> Whereas organisations that were not funded by USAID were generally much less helpful. For instance, World Vision forbid my entering 'their villages' unless I would agree to being accompanied at all times by a World Vision representative. Moreover, the director, Jean Bou Chebel refused to even disclose the areas where they were working. One World Vision ex-staff member said that:

All of the people coming from World Vision abroad to evaluate or see the programme were even kept away from the office staff! We weren't allowed to speak to anyone coming to the office from abroad. He would keep them busy going to different projects. He was determined to keep us away. He had to do this so they wouldn't ask us any questions.<sup>52</sup>

The MCC field officer was steadfastly present during my preliminary interviews with the people that he took me to meet in the South, in spite of my repeatedly asking him to allow me to speak to people alone.<sup>53</sup> The director of Oxfam was not very forthcoming about their projects and did not even tell me that they were working in rural areas. I found out by chance in the field, and as it turned out Oxfam's programme was one of the most positive experiences in

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<sup>51</sup> Initially the YMCA did not want me to enter "their villages" because of a fear that my presence, as an American, would somehow disrupt their projects.

<sup>52</sup> H. N.: adult man, INGO field officer, 1998.

<sup>53</sup> I returned to the villages where MCC was working that same week to conduct interviews with local people.

'development' for the local NGO and the men and women from Aarsal. The exception for non-USAID sponsored INGOs was Save the Children, which was very transparent, helpful, and professional. The office at Save the Children was also distinct from the others. The field and office staff at Save the Children told me that the mission director, Rajan Gill had 'created an atmosphere of respect and co-operation.' Admittedly, the Save the Children staff seemed to transmit this way of working to their programmes in the field. As one respected and long time field officer said:

The NGO person on the ground must have experience and solid skills in development. Honesty is important too, but you must remember that in the end of the day it all comes from the top. The head of the NGO will decide the overall policy on the ground.<sup>54</sup>

Though I was not particularly interested in the INGO's financial statements, of course the subject of funding did come up. Most executive directors saw this part of their work as a 'no go' area, though some were quite forthcoming about how much money they received and how they had decided to spend their funds, especially those working with USAID. One regional director for a large British funding agency told me that she could not get the local Lebanese NGOs she was working with to disclose their full financial statements, even

though she threatened to 'cut off their funds'. There continues to be an atmosphere of sacredness regarding the financial management of INGOs in Lebanon.

In a time of limited availability to international and national funds, many INGOs/NGOs are barely surviving. The competition for USAID funding in Lebanon was so intense that one INGO mission director who did not get the contract was severely criticised and nearly lost his job, and another director was dispatched to the United States for 'retraining.'

Many of these organisations revolve around a charismatic and powerful person, usually male. Being asked to disclose potentially sensitive information and maintain transparent standards of implementation and evaluation are not welcomed by many INGO mission directors. Most of the INGOs working in Lebanon are without some sort of true philosophic mission. Moreover, many of these organisations are responses to market forces, political opportunism, and sub-contracting as detailed in Chapter One.

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<sup>54</sup> Haytham Annan: adult man, INGO field officer, 1998.

I don't know what it is—whether it's just here in Lebanon—but people in these organisations here feel that it's their right to skim off of these projects. To take their share. Maybe it's something that we got from the Ottomans...tribute...but here everything is personal. It's all based on personal interests. Hardly anyone cares about doing any real good. I have worked for a lot of organisations here and it happens in all of them. This should be exposed. And the heads of the organisations know what is happening.<sup>55</sup>

Many people here are hired knowing that they are corrupt. Here...you just say someone's name and it's known. They take [money]. But they are hired again and again! They move from one organisation to the next. And USAID knows too! I mean these people are known for corruption and USAID supports them.<sup>56</sup>

### 3. Evaluations

Evaluating INGO development work continues to be a 'difficult problem' (Moore and Stewart 1998). Whether evaluations constitute a 'possible deterrent to sustainability', however, is debatable (Uphoff 1996: 31). One of the difficulties in evaluating the work of INGOs lies specifically within the way they work. Much of their work is trial and error and many of the benefits intangible and immeasurable quantitatively (Moore and Stewart 1998). Moreover, evaluations of INGO projects are almost solely conducted by the INGOs themselves, which can be interpreted as being non-participatory (Shah and Shah 1996).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> L.M. adult female, long-time INGO field officer, 1999.

<sup>56</sup> H.A.: INGO field officer, 1999.

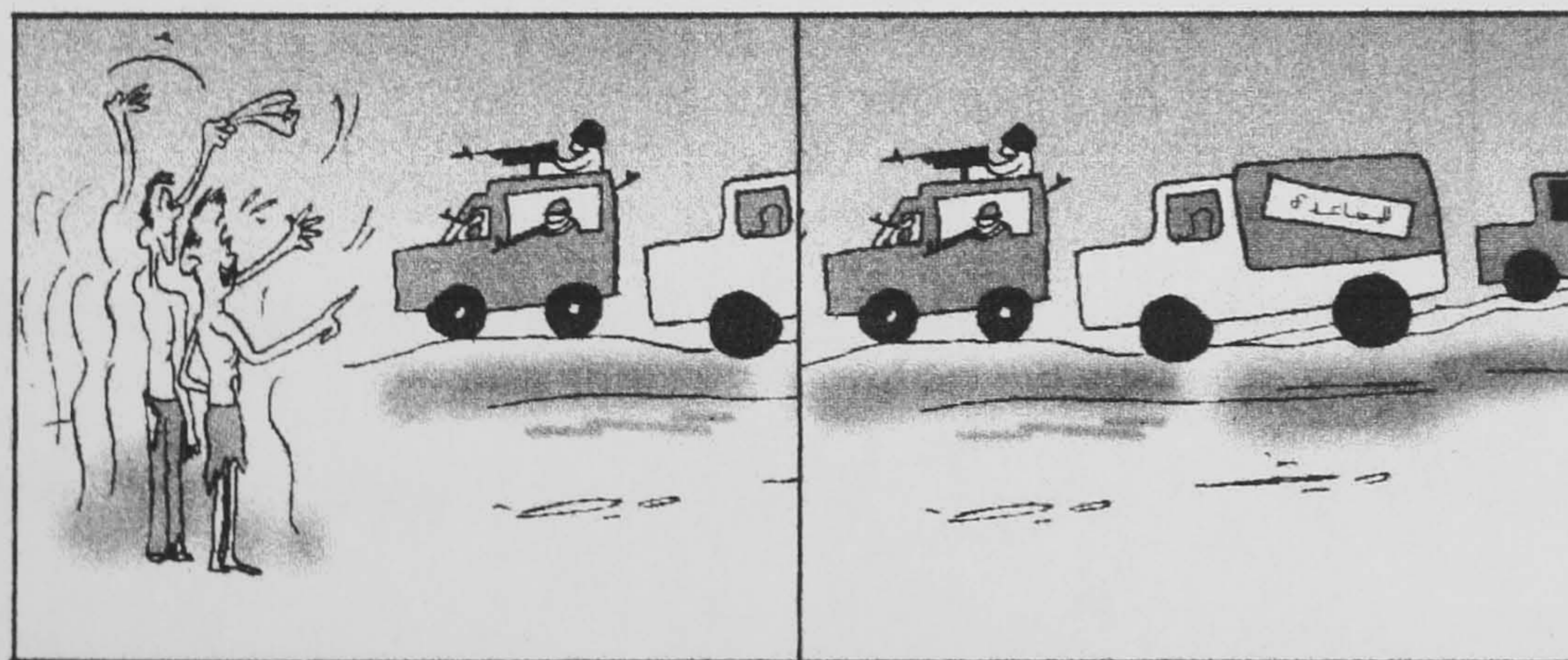
<sup>57</sup> See the web site: [www.mande.co.uk/news.htm](http://www.mande.co.uk/news.htm) for up-to-date news and information concerning monitoring and evaluation in development,

The evaluations that I was able to review covering USAID sponsored projects were quantitative and speculative. If one looks at an actual evaluation sheet from an INGO working with USAID (see appendix), one will notice that the evaluations are based on a cost-benefit analysis and are geared towards a quantitative record of projects and programmes. Moreover, the numbers listed in the activity progress report are based on potential beneficiaries instead of the actual number of local men, women and children who will benefit from a certain project. For example, a school built in the village of Tleil (Tlayl) claims that the number of benefiting students are 260, however this is not factual because many of the local families will not be sending their children to this school due to the fact that they do not have a good standard of teachers. It also claims that the community participation for this project amounts to 40,000 persons. This number is actually an extrapolation of the entire region. The population of the village of Tleil (Tlayl) where the school was built is approximately 2,000 residents only.

The evaluations that are not performed by INGOs themselves are rare. In an interview with an independent evaluation consultant, who regularly does ad hoc evaluations for the UNDP, World Bank and USAID, I was told that he verbally tells them the truth, however his written evaluations are based on

quantitative cost-benefit analysis and reflect these organisations' expectations. When I asked him why he does this, he replied that he has a family to support and if he writes the truth he will not be hired for this type of work by any organisation. He also said that on many occasions the organisations have changed his numbers so that they are more appealing to the head offices in New York and Washington D.C.<sup>58</sup>

In instances where the USAID mission director visits project sites in an attempt to 'evaluate', he must go under heavy military protection and basically walks through villages like a tourist, mostly getting information from the project field officer and the INGO mission director. Many local people told me that the American convoy created a sense of fear and made them feel like terrorists instead of people.



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<sup>58</sup> I was asked to close my notebook and to put my pen aside during this interview.



Hooray, aid is here!!! Order...order!

#### 4. Local People and Participation

Since participation is deemed to be the NGOs way of being accountable to its clients, the sham of participation translates into the sham of accountability.<sup>59</sup>

John Cohen and Norman Uphoff (1977: 6;106) suggest that participation requires more than local people agreeing to do what the organisation wants them to do:

People's involvement in *decision-making processes* about what would be done and how; their involvement in *implementing* programs and decisions by contributing various resources for cooperating in specific organizations or activities; their *sharing in the benefits* of development programs; and/or their involvement in efforts to *evaluate* such programs.

As stated above an important component of the 'new development agenda' is the concept of 'good governance', and participation is an essential element of 'good governance'. Greater emphasis on the importance of participation by local people in projects springs from the claim that broader citizen involvement in managing

their own affairs and taking responsibility for their own lives and for 'their projects' is essential for democracy.

The important thing is that no matter how much money we put into a project, at the end of the day, because the villagers contributed their own money, their own sweat and blood, it's their own.<sup>60</sup>

During my fieldwork, I frequently heard personnel from USAID and USAID funded INGOs express this kind of belief. However, I saw no evidence during the fieldwork that beneficiaries of projects were more or less committed to those projects depending on their own contributions to them. Hard work was clearly a feature of most people's daily lives and there was a high level of recognition that maintenance of projects required a necessary input from the intended beneficiaries.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Najam (1996: 346)

<sup>60</sup> Robert Randolph; quoted in the Daily Star, Friday, September 17, 1999.

<sup>61</sup> There is a danger inherent in the new development agenda in that it may be interpreted to assume that local people are somehow irresponsible or lazy, and that they have to be "taught" to hold the same norms of hard work as are supposedly held in the developed world.

The following is the aid program:

From 8 to 10 a.m. we have a lecture on the definition of aid...

from 10 to 10:20 a.m. we have distribution of aid...

from 10:20 to 4 p.m. we have siesta...

from 4 to 4:20 we have distribution of aid... again...

then we have a thank-you speech from the representative of the poor locals.

This program is not subject to any change.



Just take biscuits and shut up.

God, they are acting as if they have not seen food for a while!



One of the democratic 'good governance' requirements for USAID funded INGOs was that they had to establish a committee until there was a functioning municipality. Most of the INGOs, with the exception of Creative Associates, started working prior to the municipal elections, which were held in 1998/1999.

Following the elections, the committee was to be dissolved and then the INGO would work with the elected municipal officials. In a few cases, the INGOs maintained relationships with both the committee and the municipality. In some villages, because of size and/or politics no municipal elections were held. Typically, the committees were formed by the key people in the village. The INGO representative would go to the key person, tell him to form a committee and to include two women because USAID requires it. The whole process was quite perfunctory. In the case of MCC, the field representative went to the key person in the village and worked with him exclusively. Oxfam co-operated with the local grassroots organisation, which seemed to have worked quite well in that particular area. Save the Children worked with local male and mostly female volunteers.<sup>62</sup>

USAID required that there must be a minimum of two women per committee, however, following municipal elections the INGOs were to work with the municipality instead of the committee, consequently in most of the villages I visited no females were elected and there were no females involved thereafter.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Incidentally, the local school principal in Siddiquine was a little put off about Save the Children's programme, because his involvement was not substantial. He said "It's a good programme, but they prefer to work with women."

<sup>63</sup> Note that in most cases women's involvement in the committees was not significant.

Some men and women felt that the committees were more fair and a little more representative, as elections in Lebanon are governed by patronage and increasingly by appointment. Most people do not even have the opportunity to run for election, especially women.

Elections in Lebanon. Ha! Even if someone here wins 200,000 votes he won't get his seat. People are appointed in Lebanon not elected.<sup>64</sup>

An interesting point made by the local people was that the idea of working in committees or groups was not new to them. They routinely work together as a community. In the end, this idea of 'democratising' local people by establishing committees has more to do with the INGO and donor organisations changing *their* methods of working and not educating local people on the need for community based work with shared responsibility. This is what they do anyway. The only novelty may be the insistence on women taking part in the committee, which was really a chimera.

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<sup>64</sup> Interview in Laboueh

## 5. Women's Level of Participation in Development Programmes

*If gender is the most important element in these development programmes then where are the women?* Serving tea, the Mukhtar replied- August 1998.

All of the INGOs with the exception of the Pontifical Mission stated that one of their highest priorities was to include women in almost every aspect of their project or programme. The only INGO that followed through with this claim was Save the Children. Other than the latter, Oxfam and the YMCA, both made serious attempts to involve women in their programmes. However, the other four INGOs were sadly lacking in this respect.

Ah...women. They are involved. They provide encouragement. Women make the coffee and take it to the men working on the school, and in that way, they feel that they are involved.<sup>65</sup>

Women do women's things, like sewing. Men do men's things, like a road or building something. This is the way it is.<sup>66</sup>

Following an interview with an INGO director, a female employee started slightly complaining about the way in which women were chosen to get loans in the INGO's micro-finance programme, which was funded by USAID. As the formal interview was over and the tape recorder was not running, it was assumed

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<sup>65</sup> Mukhtar; he was the INGO link person.

that 'we could really talk'. She said, 'Tell her how the women were chosen, tell her!' He started laughing and said, 'Oh come on, you make a big deal out of everything.' She laughed nervously and told me that, 'They decided who got loans based on their looks!' The women were made to stand in front of the INGO (all male) employees and present their ideas for 'income generation' projects. The women then received loans according to 'their beauty and their bodies.'<sup>67</sup> The mission director was not phased at all. He laughed and joked and said that 'it was a good way to choose'.<sup>68</sup>

Out of seven committee meetings that I attended, four of them had no women, and in two of them the women committee members were serving soft drinks and tea and rarely injected a single word. Typically the women were wives of the 'real' committee members. Comments like the ones stated below are too numerous to detail:

Until now, no we women have not been spoken to or asked about anything. Maybe they are not interested in involving women in these projects.<sup>69</sup>

No. No. Women are not a part of these projects, these are male projects.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ali: married, adult man, farmer, Akkar, 1998.

<sup>67</sup> This woman later left the INGO.

<sup>68</sup> A.K.M.: married, adult man, mission director for an INGO, 1999.

<sup>69</sup> Mohammad: adult man, farmer from Wadi Khaled, 1998.

<sup>70</sup> Samira: married, adult woman, farmer/housewife, from the Akkar, 1998.

There is a prevalent idea that women somehow should be sewing clothes, carpet weaving or canning food to sell in shops in order to be considered 'part of the projects'. One INGO mission director told me that he was 'going to set-up a secretarial training centre' in the Ba'albek-Hermel area, because 'you know you just can't find good secretaries in Beirut!' The majority of the women I spoke to were farmers. They maintained subsistence plots and worked in cash crop production as well. Women's labour is crucial in the growing, harvesting and drying of tobacco. They do most of the time-consuming and physically demanding labour involved in tobacco production. They need a mechanism, which will save them time in stringing tobacco. The MCC field officer brought such a machine from Greece, but found that it did not work because the leaves in Lebanon are smaller than the tobacco leaves in Greece. However, with a little bit of ingenuity and money, a similar machine could be constructed here and utilised by thousands of families working in tobacco. The sad truth is that the main obstacle to the inception of such a scheme is the fact that this work is women's work, and that basically there is no will to work for change.

Many women wanted to learn new skills in agriculture and they also wanted to learn new skills that they could use to help their families financially.

Men and women complained about the same things. The political and socio-economic situation affected the entire family. It is important to state at this time that in nearly all of my interviews including group interviews, where men and women were present together, the women were very vocal and knowledgeable concerning how the local, national, regional and international political economy affected their lives. Many women, some illiterate, spoke with such incredible wisdom and insight. I could not help thinking throughout my fieldwork what a shame and waste of knowledge it was not to include these women, who are more than 50 per cent of the population in Lebanon, in discussions concerning their needs and priorities. They knew exactly what they needed and could have easily vocalised these needs to anyone who had bothered to ask.

Moreover, there are a large number of women-headed households in the rural areas. This is overwhelmingly due to male migration, usually to Beirut, for work. Many of these women do all of the planting, harvesting and selling of their produce whilst maintaining their homes and taking care of their children. I met an incredible woman in Aarsal, who had single-handedly built the second storey of her house by hauling cement blocks on her back. That was in her 'spare' time as she had three children at home and farmed a number of crops, including cash

crops. Her husband has been away for years working in Beirut and returns to the village whenever he is able, which is again a very familiar story in rural areas.

The Save the Children programme in the South, which was dedicated to young children's personality development, and depended primarily on the involvement of women as volunteer teachers and organisers, was particularly approved of and encouraged of by both women and men living in Rechananay and Siddiquine. Many stated that this programme was more important to them than infrastructure development projects, though their houses all had gaping holes, because their children had suffered so much due the atrocities of war<sup>71</sup>.

Although many of these organisations professed to be interested in women's participation, the serious involvement of women in these INGO projects was almost non-existent.

#### 6. 'Whatever happened to poverty alleviation?'<sup>72</sup>

From the beginning it was obvious that the villages which the INGOs were working in, for the most part, were places where the INGOs had already had relationships, some of them long-standing. Additionally, many of the villages,

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<sup>71</sup> According to a prominent physician working in the area, most of these children are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder in variable degrees.

which were considered to be influential, received the bulk of development aid. Villages or areas home to current MPs or ex-MPs, wealthy landlords or large land-owners and powerful tribes, important and influential confessional leaders were the prime villages of choice. Another significant category of villages was those that were either the village where the field officer or other staff members were from, or a village in the near vicinity.

As other analysts have pointed out the poorest villages often receive little or no benefit from NGOs working in development. (Tendler 1982,1989; Chambers 1983; Edwards and Hulme 1996; Weisgrau 1997) My fieldwork confirmed these findings. As part of my project, I travelled to villages not far from those where INGOs were working to assess the situation. In all cases the villages that I visited where the INGOs were not working were much worse off than the villages where they were working. Hosniye, one of the poorest villages in the Akkar region, is only 500 metres from Bkerzala, where several organisations have worked for decades. Hosniye is one of the few villages in Lebanon where it is typical to see children without footwear, even plastic footwear, which is pretty much the norm in rural areas here. This is a sizeable village without water,

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<sup>72</sup> See Judith Tendler 1989.

sanitation, and electricity. There is no school, though many of the children walk to the school in Bkerzala, if they go to school at all. When we spoke to the local people about the situation in their village, they told us that there was a lot of clan fighting and that even the municipality had collapsed because the families did not agree on the outcome of the elections. They told us that INGOs would not work there because the 'villagers were too poor'. If any village needed help in 'good governance' then probably this village would have been an ideal place to start. The fact is a true programme of 'good governance' requires time, energy and professionalism. It takes dedication and accountability on the part of the INGO. They simply do not have the skills, time or motivation to do this kind of work. Claims towards working with the poorest of the poor or working for democratic change seem hollow.

In other 'projectless' villages that I visited, the men and women stated that poverty and powerlessness could be the only reasons that they were not getting any help. Local men and women perceived that they were at a disadvantage for development aid because they did not have the financial or political resources to attract aid organisations to their villages. They expressed frustration at this and their predicament. It was widely understood among the locals that unless they

were able to get some *wasta*, someone influential to speak for them, then the chance of seeing an INGO in their village was highly unlikely.

This fact belies the rhetoric that comes out of the INGOs and especially the organisations working with USAID. They continually speak about reaching the poorest villages in Lebanon, however this is simply not true. They do reach some very poor villages, but definitely not the poorest. The poorest villages have little to offer the INGOs in return for their work, except possible opportunities for public relations. Besides, the time factor is crucial with organisations working with USAID funding, and the INGOs do not have the capacity to devote precious labour time to villages where there is a lack of political organisation or clan infighting. Moreover, the poorest villages typically do not have the 30 per cent cash or kind to invest in the project. Most are day labourers and do not own land.

## **D. Chapter Summary: Beneficiaries – between the State and INGOs**

These INGOs are a relief to us, but they don't take the place of the government.<sup>73</sup>

No organisation can take the place of the government.<sup>74</sup>

This chapter explored many of the various obstacles, constraints and factors that influence the multiple relationships, which constitute the essence of the development apparatus. The Lebanese State; notoriously weak, bureaucratic and based on patron-client practices impedes INGO development work, according to personnel from these organisations. INGOs tend to avoid the various government offices and ministries, and usually 'go straight to the top' if they need or desire clearance and/or consultation. This is clearly a political choice that has far reaching implications for the evolution of collaborative relationships with these organisations.

Moreover, though the Lebanese government is extremely bureaucratic, paternalistic and difficult to deal with, setting up authentic partnerships with government personnel in the Ministries of Agriculture or agriculture extension and research centres, the Ministry of Public Works, Electricity and Water and the Ministry of Environment for example could have substantial positive

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<sup>73</sup> Ali: married adult man, farmer from the South, 1999.

<sup>74</sup> Nadia: married adult woman, farmer/housewife from the Akkar, 1998.

repercussions for future planning and field projects. The sharing of information and lessons learned is essential so that precious resources (time and money) are not wasted.

My fieldwork made it very clear that what the farmers of Lebanon really want is a well-managed, responsible and strong state that is interested in the future direction of the country in general and rural areas in particular. I am not suggesting that the work of the INGOs is not helpful, in many cases it is. It is just that there exists a patchwork of development projects and practices that do not necessarily contribute to the overall development of the country or its citizens.

The complication with this is that for the most part total solutions to the predicament of the farmers require state intervention. These are massive problems requiring political will from the executive of the government of Lebanon. The people I spoke to usually did appreciate the work of the INGOs, but they expressed an overwhelming desire for government intervention. INGOs do not have the capacity to solve their problems comprehensively. INGOs can build agriculture roads, install water pipes, repair an irrigation network, or in rare cases even build a school. However, they cannot ensure that there will be qualified teachers to teach in the school, nor guarantee that water will flow through the

pipes or irrigation networks, nor ensure that the locals will find decent paid employment following training programmes. The often-asked question concerning plumber training courses<sup>75</sup> was: 'Okay now we have ten plumbers in the village and none of them work. What now? Anyway, we are farmers!'

Other pressures on the ground, like Syria, Israel and the political parties; Hizbullah and Amal are at the very least important considerations and at the most considerable obstacles to the development work of INGOs. The ongoing violence in the South, the agendas of the parties and the ubiquitous presence and influence of Syria in the Ba'albek/Hermel and Akkar regions force INGOs to 'bargain their place' within the myriad of players in Lebanon's rural regions. Any one of these actors could potentially forbid an INGO from working in an area or cause their work to be halted at any time, according to their whims and wishes.

The system of confessional 'balanced' development costs the INGOs time, money and resources that could be invested into villages where needs are significantly acute. INGOs seem to participate willingly in this deficient balancing act. The opportunities for possible ties to religious and/or political patrons are typically the attraction.

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<sup>75</sup> Training courses were mostly conducted by the YMCA.

Donor agendas are an additional consideration for INGOs working in rural areas of Lebanon. In order to secure funds for the survival of the organisation, donor agendas have to be adopted to a certain extent. The level of dependence on government aid, especially USAID, was extremely high for the organisations that I looked at in my fieldwork. Some of the INGOs came to or remained in Lebanon specifically because of USAID money. In nearly all cases, those INGOs getting funds from USAID were working as sub-contractors or PSCs. They were INGOs geared more to serving as non-profit market-oriented businesses working for public purposes. A social mission was clearly lacking from most of the organisation's development objective in rural areas of Lebanon. Only Save the Children, Mercy Corps in the villages of Tleil and Ghaitla and Oxfam UK demonstrated any sort of social mission.

The only reason that Mercy Corps was included above is due to the work of one of their field officers. Field officers play a significant role in the overall success or failure of development projects. These people are usually the only link that local men and women have to the organisation in Beirut. Field officers can exert enormous influence in the field, especially if they are from the village or region that they are working in. Several field officers who were working with

USAID sponsored INGOs were elected as local municipality officials. USAID viewed this as a positive occurrence, however many observers voiced reservations and felt that these people had used their positions as 'distributors of aid' to get elected.

In terms of transparency and accountability, INGOs working with USAID appeared to be more transparent concerning their projects and programmes. None of the INGOs demonstrated high degrees of accountability according to local men and women, government personnel and INGO staff members themselves. Accountability was usually linked to the main donor and the existence of a powerful patron.

Levels of community participation in development schemes varied. Some INGOs working with USAID tried to make an effort to include locals in needs assessment and project supervision, however many men and women did not feel that their needs had truly been assessed and implemented. Women's participation was almost non-existent, except for the programmes of the YMCA and Save the Children, and to a lesser extent Oxfam UK.

Finally the poorest villages received little or no help at all. This finding confirms others found all over the world and goes against INGO rhetoric of reaching the 'poorest of the poor'.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

Throughout the last two decades, the international development apparatus has been empowered by neo-liberal policy that has called for 'rolling back the state.' Juxtaposed to this policy have been concomitant calls from donors for NGOs—which it has been claimed are flexible, advocates for the poor, cost-effective, and innovative—to have a larger share of development responsibilities in developing countries. This is an internationally driven social system in which NGOs find themselves ever increasingly dependent on donor resources.

In Lebanon, INGOs have gone from initially assisting the state in providing welfare and acting as safety nets for people who were not able to secure their own social services, to providing relief and supplies during a long, and destructive war. Today, in post-war Lebanon, INGOs are in a transitional phase in which they are attempting to transform themselves from relief distributors to full-scale development organisations.

## **A. The INGO Working Environment**

Lebanon is the smallest of the near-eastern countries lying at the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It is a multi-communal state made up of many ethnic and religious groups. Since its independence from France in 1943, Lebanon has witnessed numerous internal and regional conflicts that many times have turned violent. The culture is marked by persisting primary, familial, and religious identities. Lebanon's state is a weak one, with a high penetration of patron-client relationships. The clientelist system in Lebanon, a legacy leftover from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even before, displays one constant theme in the evolving Lebanese political system; the presence of the patron who plays a fundamental role in mediating between the centre and periphery. Most of the political events that shaped the socio-economic foundation of Lebanon have contributed to and reinforced the concept of confessionalism and the practice of patronage, instead of building an institutionalised and unified system.

Lebanon's laissez-faire market economy was created to support mainly the tertiary sector usually at the expense of the industrial and agricultural ones. The predisposition towards the near singular promotion and development of services, banking and tourism explains to a great extent why other sectors,

especially agriculture, remain weak and under-productive today. A Migdalian weak state with a market economy was consciously created and solidified in order to provide autonomy for the various confessional groups. Importantly, the demonstrated ability to make short-term profits from the laissez-faire economy was used to lure possible detractors into the confessional state arrangement. The precariousness of this system and its extreme vulnerability to the Middle East crisis has fuelled Lebanon's successive and violent internecine conflicts.

Keeping this socio-economic and geo-political background in mind, I attempted to address a central and compound research question: Do specific, selected INGO programmes in rural Lebanon produce the desired results stated by their personnel, programme outlines and mission statements; and to what extent do their projects and programmes meet needs and expectations of local men and women who are the intended beneficiaries?

In order to answer the question above, more than 400 interviews were conducted with local beneficiaries, INGO mission heads and field workers, Lebanese government representatives, and other individuals from institutions and organisations working in rural development in Lebanon. The bulk of the interviews, however, were conducted with local men and women. This study

focussed on the work of seven INGOs working in Lebanon: Mercy Corps International, Save the Children Federation (SCF), The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), The Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), Oxfam UK, and The Pontifical Mission (PM). The decision to look at these particular INGOs was based on the fact that they were working in rural development in Lebanon at the time of the study, and that they agreed to participate. Four of the seven INGOs examined received funds from USAID through the \$60 million Rural Development Cluster development programme, which was part of their larger Reconstruction and Expanded Economic Opportunity programme.

The methodology utilised in the field included semi-structured individual interview techniques and group interviews using both open and closed-ended questions. The decision to utilise semi-structured interviews for my fieldwork was based on positive previous fieldwork in Lebanon using this method.

The study was conducted in various regions and focussed on five important agricultural areas in Lebanon: the Akkar, Ba'albek/Hermel, Hasbaya, the South (al Jnoub) and the Shuf. These regions were chosen because they represented rural areas where the selected INGOs were working, and each

region displayed a particular set of circumstances that impacted the work of these organisations.<sup>1</sup>

The Akkar, historically neglected and far from the centre, still maintains somewhat 'traditional' landlord arrangements in its political economy. Its nearness to Syria provides an essential outlet for impoverished farmers who need to purchase less expensive food, medical care and other important resources. However, the steady inward flow of cheaper Syrian agricultural products destroys the Lebanese market. Moreover, due to a lack of control from the Lebanese central government, Syria is able to exert a tremendous amount of influence in the everyday political and socio-economic affairs of the people living in this region.

The Ba'albek/Hermel region, long known for its hashish and opium production, is undergoing a dramatic transformation in its local political economy. The forced cessation of hashish cultivation without a concomitant replacement crop has left the majority of men and women in this region destitute, and some on the verge of starvation. Moreover, like the Akkar, many landlord arrangements remain in place and the nearness to Syria provides both opportunities and

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that my fieldwork took place during the period of Israeli occupation.

obstacles. On one hand, the locals living in this area are able to purchase inexpensive Syrian goods and services to avoid absolute destitution. On the other hand, like in the Akkar, the massive influx of cheaper Syrian produce greatly reduces profits for local Lebanese agricultural producers. The pervasive presence of Syrian soldiers and secret service in the Ba'albek/Hermel region creates a tense atmosphere and disturbs the political organisation of this region. Additionally, this area is home to two important political parties/militias; Hizbullah and Amal, both of which are confessionally Shi'ite, at war with Israel, and have a commanding influence on most aspects of everyday life. The presence of these parties and other players produces a situation in which locals must negotiate their way through a web of alliances and powerful individuals in order to achieve a minimal semblance of a livelihood.

Hasbaya, an area long known for its olive production, is cut-off from its administrative centre by Israeli occupation which has forced many of the locals to leave the area and their crops behind, thus creating ghost towns where once thriving village communities existed.

The South has known almost nothing but war for the past 20 years. The Israeli occupation and ongoing war had forced many residents of the South to

flee to Beirut and its surrounding suburbs, putting additional pressure on the capital's insufficient resources. The activities of the two main political parties/militias in this region— Hizbullah and Amal— are mostly unwelcome to the local men and women that I spoke to living in rural areas due to their ongoing guerrilla operations and concurrent Israeli attacks and retributions. Moreover, like the Akkar and the Ba'albek/Hermel regions, some landlord arrangements persist, though the omnipotent power of most of these large ruling families has collapsed. It has been replaced by the ascendancy of Amal leader and now Speaker of the House, Nabih Berri.

The Shuf was the site of hideous Druze/Christian massacres and the subsequent mass exodus of Christian communities from the region. The Shuf lies under the direct jurisdiction of Walid Jumblatt; a Druze notable, leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), parliament member, and opposition leader.

## **B. Research Findings**

My research shows that longstanding inadequate state development programmes have impeded rural development in Lebanon. This factor has been reinforced by current reductions in agricultural funding, lack of co-ordination between the FAO, INGOs, local NGOs, other international organisations and institutions working in rural development, as well as various state bodies, including the Ministry of Agriculture. The lack of planning in addition to insufficient funding serve to exacerbate the hardship experienced by local men and women, who live far from the centre, Beirut.

In Lebanon, as in many developing countries, there is a considerable waste of resources due to the duplication of work, absence of co-ordination, and corruption. In my fieldwork, nearly all of the local men and women that I spoke to complained about the insufficiency of basic needs; including lack of water resources for household and farm use, sewage treatment, electricity, medical facilities, public education for their children, agricultural inputs and training, and help in marketing their produce. I was repeatedly told that for the most part they provide many of these basic necessities for themselves.

In addition, my fieldwork showed that a healthy INGO-State relationship is lacking in Lebanon. INGOs do interface with the government, but mostly on a patron-client basis. Utilising patronage or *wasta* in the field helps to facilitate projects and programmes, whilst building relationships with influential people who could be helpful for future endeavours. This patron-client relationship is also manifest in confessional or 'balanced' development, where some villages may get development help, not because they are necessarily needy, but because the INGO must satisfy confessional patrons, many of whom are also government officials.

This concept of "balanced development", originally initiated by the state in order to satisfy confessional groups, was also adopted by the INGOs in order to maintain a façade of non-sectarianism. Along the same line, the poorest villages get very little or no development aid at all. In all of the 'projectless' villages that I visited, which were near sites where INGOs were working, locals told me that INGOs would not work in their villages because they were too poor and powerless with no influential patron to attract these organisations.

Though the men and women living in rural areas of Lebanon appreciated the work of these INGOs, they desperately want a well-managed, responsible and unified state, which would be capable of developing their areas in a comprehensive way, instead of the patchwork development projects that they currently experience with INGOs.

Donor agendas, especially those like USAID, which stress speed, efficiency and measure projects along the lines of quantitative cost-benefit analysis increase INGO personnel's reliance on patrons, who can facilitate their work. In my study, I observed that the INGOs working with USAID were for the most part functioning as PSCs. They were contracted businesses, which were accountable to the contractor—USAID. These INGOs were not value-driven and played almost no role as advocates for local men and women. The organisations did not exhibit accountability to local men and women nor to the corresponding state ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture). For the most part, the INGOs appeared to be accountable to powerful patrons in and outside the government and to donors as well.

The INGOs that I looked at which were working with USAID were to a certain extent more transparent than the INGOs not getting funding from this official aid source, especially when it came to facilitating my research project. This is due to the fact that USAID maintains an office in Lebanon, and its officials demanded transparency as a prerequisite to garner their funds. It came out during my fieldwork in interviews with other donor representatives that many NGOs in Lebanon are notorious for a lack of transparency, and this was seen as a persistent and destructive obstacle for foreign funding organisations. Evaluations, if conducted, were quantitative and speculative and appeared to be done in order to satisfy the needs of accounting departments.

When looking at levels of participation, all of the selected INGOs—with the exception of one—claimed to include women in almost every aspect of their projects or programmes, only two of them made a serious effort. For the rest, women were simply not a part of their projects. Many of the women I spoke to complained that they had simply never been spoken to, and that they would have liked the opportunity to be included.

To sum up, according to the local men and women living in rural areas of Lebanon that I spoke to, the INGO programmes and projects that were a part of my study did not satisfy their most pressing development needs for a number of reasons; however, due to the near absence of state-led development, they were forced to be reliant on a combination of rare, if any, state programmes, INGO and local NGO programmes, local political agents (political parties, warlords, landlords, local strong-men, confessional leaders and power-brokers) for what scant developmental assistance they did get. The result is uncoordinated and sporadic development projects, many of which fail to reach their targeted clientele due to bureaucracy, corruption, lack of co-ordination and resources, the internal agendas of the providers themselves, the impact of international political demands/actions, and a fragmented and weak state.

### **E. Future Research**

This research has broader implications for the study of INGOs working in development, state-society relations as well as for understanding the processes and relationships involved in sustainable development and local, regional and global political change. This analysis suggests enhanced possibilities for building

partnerships, co-ordination and co-operation within the context of a weak state. This study, of course, has focused on the case of Lebanon during a specific time period, and thus it is impossible to draw definite conclusions about the dynamics of how INGOs, donors, states, local citizens, and others shape the outcome and sustainability of the development process. The implications for countries, such as Jordan, Syria, Egypt and the West Bank and Gaza within the Middle East provide a basis for further scholarship and empirical research, especially as these countries witness the growth and emergence of groups from within and from outside of society addressing issues of poverty, environmental degradation, and human rights and open their borders to assistance from international donors who may seek to pursue several objectives, which may include among others regional security or even political and economic liberalisation.

This study raises questions about the processes strengthening the relationships between all of the players involved in the development apparatus, and for the donor's role in promoting this process.

Moreover, this work points to the importance of the international dimension in supporting local development and strengthening the links that could help to rebuild states and societies destroyed by war and made bankrupt through

corrupt practices. The international dimension and connection has not been a sufficient condition for reform in Lebanon, but it has contributed somewhat to the betterment of local men and women's lives. International financial, material and moral support is essential in the continued advancement of countries in the developing world.

Lastly, it is my hope that the lives of men and women living in rural areas of Lebanon, as well as other developing countries, will somehow improve—even slightly—and that the spirit of human co-operation and partnership will prevail.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Laws regarding voluntary associations in Lebanon**

The 1909 Law of Associations applied to both non-political and political associations. It guaranteed the right of association and required only that the association notify the government of its by-laws and establishment. The basic principles of the laws governing civil associations did not change following independence, though some modifications did take place. However, because of the current regime's controversial interpretation and application of laws relating to the civil society many changes are now beginning to take place. For example, the Ministry of Interior, in violation of the law, has stated that new associations require a permit from the Ministry. The law on associations requires only that the association merely notify the Ministry of their existence. There are currently about 1,100 associations registered at the Ministry of Interior.

### **Stages in the development of associations**

(Adapted from Salam 1997:29-31)

During the period between 1900 and the 1930's, the first phase in the development of organised associations emerged. This time period was characterised by their rapid growth and legalisation. Several significant developments distinguished this period:

- Rural Christian migrants formed co-operative family associations to consolidate their position in the capital;
- Shi'ite emigrants from the south formed associations based on their villages and regions of origin;

- Armenian refugees fleeing the genocide established ethnic Armenian associations to protect and promote their interests;
- The Sunni, Greek Orthodox, and Druze communities indigenous to Beirut established associations to deal with problems of youth, adolescence, and changing moral values in a modernising city;
- Non-confessional associations were established to care for the blind;
- A number of associations emerges to protect embattled handicraft artisans against the increasing spread of manufactured products;
- Syndicates and labour unions began organising.

The 1940s and 1950s marked the second stage in the development of associations. The most significant changes during this time were:

- The birth of sectarian association. The different religious groups responded to Lebanon's independence, and the ensuing mix of communities in Beirut, by establishing associations to socialise and control members of their community;
- The emergence of strong neighbourhood leagues. These were established to maintain solidarity among city dwellers, both as newcomers flooded into Beirut and as city dwellers moved from one neighbourhood to another;
- The development of strong Sunni family associations. This resulted from the erosion of the authority of the traditional Sunni families and the rise of other families which sought to socialise and organise a new following;
- The growth of more social welfare associations as the problems of rapid urbanisation multiplied;
- The establishment in 1947 of the first organised women's association-the League of Women's Rights;

- The establishment of numerous cultural associations. These were formed by poets, writers, university graduates, etc...

The third stage of development occurred sometime between 1960 and the break of war in 1975. It is during this period that the establishment of non-sectarian associations was most vigorous:

- Labour unions emerged to play a strong role in the economic and political life;
- A number of leftist political parties and movements gained prominence;
- Numerous professional associations were founded;
- Unions and political parties, often on the left, became more influential among the Shi'ite residents of the city. This reduced the influence of traditional village and regional associations.

The fourth stage took place during the years of war, 1975-1990, and was characterised by:

- The decline of non-confessional associations as Lebanon split along confessional lines;
- The revival of family and neighbourhood associations as the state's power was severely reduced;
- The emergence of several Islamist groups - Hizbullah, the Ahabash, the Jama'a Islamiyya;
- The emergence of welfare-oriented non-governmental organisations to deal with the consequences of the war. These included associations for the handicapped, for the care of orphans, and for drug treatment;

- The emergence, especially toward the end of the war, of a number of non-confessional anti-war associations which brought together activists from various parts of the country.

The fifth stage of development extends from the end of the war in 1990 to the present. This stage is characterised by:

- A continuing trend toward the establishment of family associations in a persistent atmosphere of insecurity vis-à-vis the transformations in the post-war city;
- The multiplication of confessionally-based associations as the centrality of confessionalism in the new political system becomes evident;
- The downsizing of some private welfare associations as the state resumes services interrupted during the war;
- The emergence of a number of environmental NGOs to address the growing environmental crisis in Lebanon;
- The emergence of a number of human rights and politically-oriented NGOs to express concerns about the abuses of the post-war government;
- The emergence of a number of neighbourhood business associations to pick the pieces left by the disintegration of Beirut's business centre during the war.

Villages	Population	Sect(s)	Region	Average Monthly Income	INGO	Project(s)
Bkerzala	3,000	Maronite	Akkar	1,000,000 LL (\$667)	Mercy Corps	Sewerage system
Bajaa'	500	Sunni	Akkar	250,000 LL (\$167)	Mercy Corps	Water reservoir/small road
Tleil & Ghaitla	3,700	Mixed	Akkar	300,000 LL (\$200)	Mercy Corps	School
Hosnie	500	Sunni	Akkar	41,667 LL (\$27.79)	No project	No project
Ghzaile	300	Sunni	Akkar	300,000 LL (\$200)	No project	No project
Khirbet al-Hayat	450	Sunni	Akkar	300,000 LL (\$200)	Pontifical Mission	Irrigation network/School
Hise		Sunni	Akkar/Wadi Khaled	200,000 LL (\$133)	CHF	School repair/irrigation network
Hneider	2,800	Sunni	Akkar/Wadi Khaled	200,000 LL (\$133)	CHF	Agriculture road
Charbine	2,500	Shi'ite	Hermel	200,000 LL (\$133)	CHF	Agriculture road
Fisan	500	Shi'ite	Hermel	200,000 LL (\$133)	CHF	Water network
Quaigh	1,700	Shi'ite	Hermel	200,000 LL (\$133)	No project	No project
Naasra Khirbet el-bouten	50	Shi'ite	Hermel	200,000 LL (\$133)	CHF	Agriculture road
Maasri	60	Shi'ite	Hermel	200,000 LL (\$133)	CHF	Agriculture road
Nabi Ousman	2,300	Shi'ite	Beka'a	200,000 LL (\$133)	YMCA	Irrigation network
El Ain	6,800	Shi'ite	Beka'a	200,000 LL (\$133)	YMCA	Income generation project
Irsal	25,000	Sunni	Beka'a	200,000 LL (\$133)	CHF/Oxfam UK	Agriculture road
Kfeir	5,500	Mixed	Hasbaya	300,000 LL (\$200)	YMCA	Agriculture road
Zaoutar Sharkieh	2,000	Shi'ite	The South	700,000 LL (\$467)	No project	No project
Zaoutar Gharbieh	1,500	Shi'ite	The South	700,000 LL (\$467)	MCC	Irrigation network/Tents
Siddiquine	1,700	Shi'ite	The South	400,000 LL (\$266)	Save the Children	Children's Programme
Recheknanay	900	Shi'ite	The South	200,000 LL (\$133)	Save the Children	Children's Programme
Majdel Meouch	5,300	Maronite	The Shuf	400,000 LL (\$266)	Pontifical Mission	Multiple projects
Kfarniss	2,300	Maronite	The Shuf	400,000 LL (\$266)	Pontifical Mission/YMCA	Multiple projects