

WEEKLY REPORT

JUNE 1- JUNE 8, 2007

Lebanon Rapid Post-Conflict Recovery Program

Welcome to Mercy Corps Lebanon's weekly progress report on activities implemented in southern Lebanon, Borj el Barajne, and the Bekaa Valley. Please direct any questions or content suggestions to Sarah Kouzi: skouzi@lb.mercycorps.org or Yara Sfeir yrsfeir@lb.mercycorps.org



Show in Baalbek Ras El Ain park viewed by children and their parents

Mercy Corps implements programs in the following sectors:

- I. Protection**
- II. Logistics and Relief Commodities**
- III. Food Security & Agriculture**
- IV. Water Sanitation and Hygiene**
- V. Nutrition**

I. PROTECTION

PSYCHOSOCIAL AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Activities complementing cleaning campaign in Baalbek

Mercy Corps and its partner LOST organized a variety of social activities for hundreds of kids in Baalbek including plays in Ras el Ain Park and wall mural activities.

The purpose of the mural is to beautify their city, as well as to encourage children's and teenagers' creativity by allowing their self expression through drawing.

The mural is one of the activities of the clean-up campaign project that Mercy Corps and LOST are carrying out in Baalbek town. The project's activities involve cleaning the pond and river of Baalbek, painting the side walk rails, painting walls and store fronts, distributing bags and distributing stickers on cleanliness. These activities are implemented in a main street called Bchara el Khoury. 447 students from three different schools volunteered in the project.

Mercy Corps also distributed stickers promoting their clean-up campaign in schools and the streets of Baalbek. The stickers are made to encourage cleanliness and can be seen on students' books and car windows all over town.



Mural in Baalbek



Picture taken in Ras El Ain park during a show (left) and "Your city is your home, keep it clean" is the message on the mural painting in Baalbek (above)



The goal of this project is not only to clean up the center of town but also to change the behavior and social attitudes about littering in Baalbek. By letting students participate in these activities, they will be encouraged to take an active role in noticing and fixing problems in their communities, as well as be creative in dealing with their town like painting walls by themselves, for example.



During the art training in Bourj Hammoud

Art training in Bourj Hammoud

Eleven members of Borj Hammoud Youth Leadership Center had an art training on June 3, 2007. The youth performed several beautiful drawings that had Mercy Corps staff and the art trainer amazed. A third and final art

training session will take place at the end of June. Following that, the youth will perform a mural and exhibit their work. These activities aim at

alleviating the stress that most youth have burdened as a result of the summer conflict.



One of the drawings done by a youth during the training

Village Festival in Nabatiye

In the framework of promoting children’s rights, ensuring participation and providing entertainment to the communities from ten villages in the caza of Nabatiye, Mercy Corps in partnership with the Kamel Yousef Jaber Social and Cultural Center, organized the last festivals the past weeks in Zefta, Deir Zahrani, Arab Salim, Qsaibe, Jbaa and Ain Qana. A performance on child rights and a school mural painting were amongst the activities that were held. Painting activities were executed on the school fences and gave the main entrance a friendlier look; in case of Ain Qana School – for example - the mural covered political emblems.

In Qsaibe, Taime, a 12 year old girl, showed Mercy Corps a house she painted and explained that “the pink color I decided to use indicates freedom, my biggest dream is to see the world” and symbolically she added to her painting a window, “a window to the world, to information and people” as she clarified. In her life, Taime visited only the villages of Insar and Nabatiye, to see a play at the Kamel Youssef Jaber Social and Cultural Center.



Taime in front of her Dream House (above); Play in Qsaibe (below)

In Jbaa, children also painted the garbage containers that were rusty and old and gave them orange and blue colors.

Approximately 2,500 children from 11 villages benefited from the festivals and their biggest value was that they were implemented in the villages thus increasing the participation and accessibility for poorer children whose families cannot afford the transportation to Nabatiye.

The festivals helped the Kamel Youssef Jaber Social and Cultural Center to gather new volunteers from the villages. For example Ismail, a student attending the last year of secondary



school in Roumine accompanied the organizers during all the activities ever since the festival was done at his school. He will be included in the workshop for the summer camp trainers starting next weekend and will help organizing the activities with children this July.



Children painting a garbage can in Jbaa (right) and a picture taken during the performance in Deir Zahrani (left)

Psychosocial Assistance to Students in Public Secondary Schools in Nabatiye

Mercy Corps, the Kamel Youssef Jaber Social and Cultural Center and the Public School Support Association are implementing activities in public schools in Nabatiye and counseling students who need it the most. The activities aim at assisting secondary students to overcome stress, increase their participation and free expression in addition to encouraging team work.

Due to the examination time, the project is in its closing stages; however it has been decided to keep, during the month of June, three social workers out of 10. The social workers will be available for all the students throughout the exam period, however, 200 student cases have been identified as having problems with passing their exams without the additional support of the Project Coordinator, Dr Sana, explained.

II. LOGISTICS AND RELIEF COMMODITIES

Distribution of Sport Equipment to Public Schools in Nabatiye Caza

Mercy Corps is planning to deliver a total of 69 ping – pong tables, 30 sets of handball posts, 41 volleyball sets, 20 basketball systems and 60 backboards, accompanied by balls, rackets and other accessories (balls, nets, rackets) to public schools in Nabatiye Cazas. The deliveries have been contracted and will be finished by mid-July.

Many schools are going to host the summer camps so the equipment will be used already during the coming months.



Basketball hoop in Arab Salim Primary and Intermediate School – worn out backboard covered with National flag

III. WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Rehabilitation of sanitary facilities in Nabatiye

Mercy Corps is rehabilitating 11 sanitary facilities in public schools in Nabatiye; the contractor has finalized on average 50% of the works in the first group of six schools and started excavations for the septic tank in Jibshit Primary School. The school administration expressed its great gratitude for the project, as it will solve the major problem in the building and increase the hygiene standards for the students. In Abdellatif Fayad School, thanks to the Project, the girls will gain separate sanitary facilities.

Excavation works for septic tank in Jibshit Primary School



Cleanliness campaign in Baalbek



Mercy Corps and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) started a hygiene educational program and the distribution of hygiene kits to 12 schools on June 2nd. Mercy Corps donated 1500 hygiene kits to be distributed to the students in Baalbek public schools. The MOSA will finish the distribution and the educational lessons by next week. Many of the targeted schools have or will receive new bathrooms through the program.

Farah Kasar receiving her hygiene kit

At El Takmellya el Jadida el Thanya School, a presenter from MoSA explained to the students the importance of brushing their teeth three times per day to prevent dental problems. Other important hygiene topics were also discussed.

The director of Naji Jamal el Deen School thanked Mercy Corps and MoSA for taking care of the students and helping in educating them. He added “It’s good to find someone who cares about children and especially about their health.” The director also thanked Mercy Corps for the previous help it offered to his school. Mercy Corps had rehabilitated Naji Jamal el Deen’s school and distributed heating fuel during the winter after the war.



Students getting ready to receive their hygiene kit in a Baalbek school



Farah Kasar, a 12-year-old 6th grade student, said “I always clean my teeth and take care of my health. And I believe that cleanliness starts at home.” She added “People should take care of the environment that they are living in”.

**Farah Kasar
always cleans
her teeth**

IV. SUCCESS STORY

Douris Elementary School has 501 students. Mercy Corps together with the Ministry of Social Affairs distributed 300 hygiene kits to the students in addition to raising their awareness concerning their dental hygiene.

Omar Huleihel a 12 year old student who attends the sixth. Grade, tries to take care of his teeth. He stated, “Sometimes I cannot afford to buy tooth paste, now I thank you very much because I will have no more damage to my teeth.”

Mohammad Wali, a nine year old first grader, said “I never took care of my teeth before, but from now on my teeth will be the most important thing in my life”.



**Omar Huleihel will have no more
damage to his teeth**



**A student demonstrating the
correct way to brush his teeth**



**Students carrying their hygiene
kits**



**Mohammad Wali's teeth are the
most important thing in his life**