I. Introduction

The Nahr al-Bared refugee camp crisis left a tremendous impact on both the regions of Akkar and Tripoli on many different levels: security-wise, economically and socially. One should acknowledge that even before the crisis, Akkar had been the poorest area in Lebanon (see map of Akkar in annex): 63% of the families living in Akkar are deprived of their basic needs and face serious poverty (UNDP, 2007) (see also Graph 1 in annex). Labeled as the forgotten Akkar, (Mouchref, 2008) as well as the deprived and the disadvantageous (Nehmeh, 2007), this district – the lead rural area in Lebanon – comes first in terms of poverty and therefore an intervention was staged in order to meet the needs of the Akkar population and allocate some resources for the poor in the region. According to the mapping of the living conditions in Lebanon, the most four deprived sided districts (kadaas) are Bint Jbeil, Hermel, Akkar and Marjayoun consecutively according to the classification of the kadaas having a percentage of deprived families exceeding 60% of the total residents of the Kadaa.

Thus Kada Akkar ranks the first among all districts in Lebanon in terms of poverty and deprivation. If we take into consideration the deprived population number of every district and compare that to Lebanon’s population, Akkar’s holds 12.5% of the total number of deprived people in Lebanon.

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1 I am grateful to all resources. People I’d like to thank are all the mayors and civil society actors who give me some of their precious time to provide me with information and to comment on this report, especially Aicha Mouchref, Clement-Nadim Zakhia, Ahmad Jehjeh and Alia Shaban.
The situation of Akkar is endemic and has been a result of many historical reasons leading to its problems in social structure and political economy that date back to the 1960s. Throughout 1959 to 1960, a national survey by the Lebanese Ministry of Planning established the coastal plain of Akkar as the poorest and most deprived area in the country (IRFED 1959-60). The main attribute of the area was the feudal nature of society, with a ruling elite of large estate owners (bey, pl. bekawat) controlling landless labourers and tenants working as sharecroppers on the feudal estates. Remnants of this feudal system (iqtaa), persisted into the early 1970s (Gilsenan 1996; quoted by Knudsen, 2006). The tribal system has been replaced by the extended families’ power structure.

Similarly, the regions of Dinniyeh and Tripoli have been identified by different studies as being among the poorest and most vulnerable of Lebanon. The mohafazat of the North also have the highest “inter-governate inequality” in Lebanon, meaning that these mohafazat have the widest gap between the rich and the poor. Tripoli and Akkar are extremely poor while Zghorta, Koura, Batroun and Bcharre have a relatively low poverty rate (Mouchref, 2008).

This need assessment report will focus on two rings of localities surrounding the Nahr al-Bared camp. The first ring is composed of Beddawi, Minieh, Bhanine, Deir Ammar, Bebnine and Muhammara. The second ring that was defined by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) in close consultation with the Prime Minister covers the following municipalities: Aayoun Ghozlan, Raouda, Beit el hash, Ranaiyé, Hakour, Miniara, Bqerzla, Dahr Ayas, Al Qarqaf, Mar Touma, Majdala, Borj El Arab, Bzal, Al Rihanieh, Deir Dalloum and Halba. With regards to sectarian divisions, all of these localities are Sunnite except Mar Touma and Halba (mixed cities), first inhabited by Greek Orthodox families, who were later joined by Sunnis and Maronites as well as families of other Christian communities (World Bank, 2006).

Akkar is not a homogeneous area: we can speak of different clusters of populations. However, whilst looking to the concerned localities of the two rings, one may easily realize that they belong to a predominantly poor cluster. Two factors apparently played a vast role in the socio-economic situation of this region: outmigration and the role of the diaspora from one side and the missionary schools from the other side. Historically, the outmigration from the Christian localities (particularly the area of al-Joumeh: Beino and Qobayyat and Bazbina, Jibrayel, Rahbe and Beit Mallat) has been much more important than that from the Muslim localities. Some of the emigrants send remittances regularly and others even subsidize some of their municipality projects. One should add to that the presence of the good missionary schools in these localities. Many Christian localities constitute a better off cluster compared to the Muslim clusters.

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2 More generally, income disparities appear to be correlated with confessional identities; poor and Muslim and rich and Christian. In a country where income disparities may have played a major role in triggering the war, growing social inequalities could again destabilise the country. See Are Knudsen (2006).

3 Again as Mouchref noted (2008) at the governorate level disparities in poverty also exist. For example, “villages like Beino and Qobayyat have a relatively higher living standard than poverty pockets like Fnaydeq, Bibnine and Qobbet Bchamra.”
During the recent events of the second week of May, fierce clashes in the Akkar region killed 14 people, including civilians, when fights occurred mainly between members of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and supporters of the Future Movement. In another incident, seven Syrian laborers from Aleppo and their driver from south Lebanon were wounded by gunmen who set up a checkpoint on the Minya highway.

The whole economic situation in Akkar is a threat to Lebanese stability. Despite having the Nahr El Bared war positioning the large majority of the Sunni population as moderate, the Christian villages of Akkar still live under constant fear. Some people talk about of “Village Gaulois” syndrome.

Three recent factors played a major role in worsening the situation of concerned localities: the closure of Syrian borders during and after the July war between Lebanon and Israel, the Nahr al-Bared crisis and finally the freezing weather of February 2008 (which has affected and killed crops).

II. Some Socio-Economic and Urban Data

Understudied localities of the first and second rings vary between Lumpen urban and rural areas. Because of Lebanon’s small size, urban migration needs not imply severing ties with the natal village but allows frequent visits and in some cases even commuting between the rural homestead and the urban workplace. A phenomenon common to rural Lebanon is the urbanization of rural areas, turning villages into agro-towns with a transient population of residents, migrants and commuters. This has also changed the physical lay-out of the villages which now resemble peri-urban townships.

All these localities mainly depend on the sectors of agriculture and sometimes fishing. Some trade activities as well as taxi drivers are present but very little having to do with the industry sector. (see graph 2 in annex)

Table 1 in the Annex provides some data about the population size and the annual budget of the municipalities. One can notice clearly that, when the data is available, the municipality budget is very small. Almost all of the mayors complained of lacking financial resource for their respective locality. While the average family size in Lebanon is 4.7, in Akkar it is 5.6 (Nehmeh, 2007). Also, in the region around Nahr al-Bared, this average is much higher reach 6 to 7. Currently, 16 per cent of the families and 22.7 per cent of the individuals in Akkar earn less than 60,000 liras (LL) (US$40) per month, compared with a national rate of 4.5 and 6.3 per cent. (Knudsen, 2006) The General Federation of Labour Unions says a family of four needs a minimum of $640 a month to secure the necessary basket of goods and services needed for a decent livelihood. The figure is based on joint research conducted with the help of the

4 Again as Mouchref noted (2008) at the governorate level disparities in poverty also exist. For example, “villages like Beino and Qobayyat have a relatively higher living standard than poverty pockets like Fnaydeq, Bibnine and Qobbet Bchamra.”
International Labour Organization (ILO). Moreover, the inflation in 2007 hit 16 percent, according to the Central Administration for Statistics.\(^5\)

The rate of economic activity in Akkar is low compared to national rate. The reason is the age formation of Akkar, the decrease of female economic activity and lack of work opportunities. (Nehma, 2007) In Akkar, the UNDP also observed the highest proportion of child labor in Lebanon, with 32.5% of the 10 to 19 year olds working. (World Bank, 2006)

As we mentioned before, the impact of migration on social change is not very important. However, Anthropologist Maha Kayal (2008) has witnessed a reproduction of Minieh’s social relationships in the diaspora. Many of the emigrants from Minieh return to it to get married to a cousin living there. In fact, all the localities we deal with share traditional communities and are increasingly influenced by some conservative political forces, including – sometimes – the Salafist Islamist movements. This can be partially explained the resistance of people in these areas to accept reproductive health and family planning programs.

There are indications that the economic downturn in Akkar and Tripoli has reinforced Islamist sentiments and growing support to such Sunni Islamist groups such as Jamaa al-Islamiyya. This coincides with the fact that the lack of government services has increased the support for alternative forms of government (Haddad, 2002: 215). Many of people we interviewed expressed a feeling of sectarian discrimination, pointing out for instance the huge difference in road infrastructure between Batroun, Ehden and Zakharta from one side and Akkar from the other side.

In pre-war Lebanon, the most common way of accessing jobs and sevices was by joining clientelistic networks controlled by an urban-based merchant elite of political bosses (Ar. za‘im, pl. zu’ama) (Johnson 1985, 1996). The civil war disrupted these networks and replaced zu‘ama clientelism with a new and more complex mix of clientelistic networks developed around militias, parties and Islamist groups (Hamzeh 2001). The connection between clientelism and poverty seem very important. (Knudsen, 2006) The presence of NGOs and institutions (political, religious, local, international-non religious) in Akkar area is very weak compared to other area in Lebanon. We find however some youth, sport and Women association\(^6\) and very rare intermediary NGOs or international organizations.\(^7\) Partnership between NGOs and municipality is very loose.

**Economic Sectors**

There are many economic sectors but the most important is agriculture, fishing and trade.

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\(^5\) See [http://www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)

\(^6\) See for instance, Women Welfare Association in Behnine.

\(^7\) With very few exceptions, like Mada, an enviromental NGO operating specifically in Akkar area since 2000. Their office in Akkar will be open very soon. Some NGOs are operating from Beirut or Tripoli, like A Step Away (ASA)
Agriculture Sector: The economy in the concerned area relies heavily on agriculture. More generally, in the Akkar, over 50% of the population depending on incomes generated from agricultural activities. This share becomes 75% of workforce for a locality like Muhammra. This sector which is dominated by small farms with outdated techniques, has many structural problems: bad agro-roads, pollution from soil and underground water through absence of a sewage, wastewater and solid waste system.

According to an agricultural survey by FAO and the Lebanese Ministry for Agriculture, the total available agricultural surface in Akkar amounts to 37,427 ha, 0.8% of which are currently abandoned and 0.5% of which are not yet developed. Over the last decades urban sprawl and uncontrolled urbanization in the agricultural plain has become a problem, threatening the potential of the agricultural plain. Another major problem is the pollution of soils and irrigation waters. Indeed, there is no water treatment plant in the region and sewage waters are directed into the Aaoueik River which is used to irrigate agricultural lands.

The severe structural problems in the Akkar are leading to increasing desertification and pollution thus affecting Halba’s and Akkar’s economy significantly. Major threats leading to land degradation in the agricultural plain of Akkar - as identified in the National Action Program - include poverty, forest fires, unsustainable charcoal production and excessive fertilizer and pesticide use.

Fishing Sector: The fishing sector currently consists of small fishing boats owned by fishers themselves. This sector is important for the locality of Bebnine and Badawwi. According to Samer Fatfat (2008) Seawater infiltration into the ground given the high drilling activities, as well as seawater pollution due to solid, wastewater and boats’ fuel jeopardizes the fishing industry.

Trade: The retail and trade sector is dominated by two major features: the vegetable market and the livestock market. The trade sector of these localities is thus directly linked to their surroundings, in both ways, as a selling point for the goods produced in the agricultural plain, and as a provider of necessary materials and equipments to the farmers of the area.

Industry: Industry is a marginal economic sector in Halba and Akkar and it concerns mostly food industries and car mechanic shops. The recent rehabilitation of the slaughterhouse has significantly improved the situation of slaughtering in the city and the pollution this activity produced. However, the problem of car mechanic shops, located in the centre of the town along the main road, will remain unresolved as long as the planned industrial zone is unrealized.

Other than these sectors, many of young people work as taxi drivers or in the public sector: school teacher, military and internal security forces. In addition to that, many people are daily workers in agriculture and construction.

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Access to Education and Health

Akkar records the highest illiteracy percentage in Lebanon (for females, 30.5% compared to 13.6% in Lebanon and for males 23.1% compared to 9.3% in Lebanon (Nehmeh, 2007). The rate of enrolment in public schools in Akkar is the highest in Lebanon. Akkar records low levels in education enrolments within different stages, particularly high school and university education – the lowest in Lebanon. Moreover, Akkar holds a high percentage of delayed education – the highest rates have been recorded there. According to Samer Fatfat (2008) drop-outs syndrome is driven by the overwhelming economic situation, whereby parents oblige their children to enter the informal job market early in life to assist the family in making its living.

Another problem in this region that the majority of the teachers are lacking teaching skills and are contractual and not permanent staff. Support training teachers to use curriculum and new techniques in education is very important.

Akkar and our localities have several education institutions. There are many public schools providing education from kindergarten to the secondary level. However, the physical conditions of these schools however, are dilapidated, especially in Behnine and Muhammara. In addition there are many private schools. Other educational institutions include the Dar Moualamin, a teacher’s school, and technical schools that provide with BT and TS degrees in finance, computer science, mechanic, electronics, architectural drawings, administrative computing and offer training for kindergarten teachers.

Due to the poor employment opportunities in Akkar and especially in the concerned localities, the population with higher education levels is more likely not to return to their place of origin. Consequently, there is a lack of well trained and skilled labour in Akkar.

The health infrastructure in the concerned localities is insufficient to accommodate all the demand of ill people and lack of many specializations. Specificity of Akkar that the sweeping majority of the active population are in the informal sector that provides no indemnity, social security or health insurance. This infrastructure includes public modest hospital in Halba and two private. In addition, there are medical centers that offer health services and medical check-ups. Some of these centers, such as the Health Department or the Centre for developmental services of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Red Cross Centre, Al-Hariri center in Bebnine and other centers run by NGOs, offer services at very low rates, and are affordable to the most disadvantaged populations in Akkar. Many of these health centers don’t offer a variety of service and don’t have specialized doctors. The bad transportation system, especially for the remote village, discourages people to consult medical centers. There are also many pharmacies and medical laboratories. Before the destruction of Nahr al-Bared, the new camp had offered many medical services with affordable price to the whole area of Akkar and Badawi.

Sewage and Potable Water

The most problematic infrastructural issue in the concerned localities, and especially Halba, is the sewage network and the provision of potable water. However, sewage and portable water are
more serious in upper Akkar (Jourd and Joumeh) and we cannot treat the localities of the two rings without starting from upper Akkar.

The sewage network is a major pollutant of potable water in Halba, because of the deterioration and proximity of both networks. Moreover, there is not a water treatment plant in Halba or its surroundings, which poses major environmental problems, as the sewage water is directly linked to the Aaoueik River, used to irrigate the agricultural lands in the Sahl plain.

**Relationship with the Camp**

There are different functions which the camps serve that have created a Palestinian socio-spatial dynamic based on three aspects: territorial permanence (a place of stability and continuity), communitarian space (a place of ongoing social interactions), and a space of contact and conflict with the surrounding communities. However, while few camps are economically integrated with their surrounding areas, they are largely disconnected from the urban fabric. Contrary to many researchers who conflate economic integration of the camp with urban and social integrations, the difference is huge. The camps are not different in this aspect from ghettos and other enclaves that have been traditionally integrated with their cities economically but not socially, and neither from an urban point of view. Concerning the Nahr al-Bared camp, historically, the relationship between the camp and its surroundings has been relatively strong. Despite the fact that there are some marriages between the residents of the camps and those from the surrounding areas, the camp was relatively integrated economically but not socially. In spite of the exclusion of the Palestinians from the professional labor market, there were many transgressions as Nahr al-Bared offered an attractive market for Akkar’s agriculture as well as smaller industries, and also provided cheap labor for the region. This camp had succeeded before the crisis to provide cheap medication for the Akkar and Minieh area: the generally high medication costs pushed Bebnin’s residents to purchase their medications from El-Bared camp pharmacies.

The market in Nahr al-Bared had many cheaply costing products which attracted many people from the neighboring towns. According to Samer Fatfat (2008), informants estimated the camp’s products used to save around 20% of the residents’ purchasing power. Mada’s survey (Mouchref, 2008) also provided valuable data: according to Mada “58.2 percent of households and 68.6 percent of businesses reported that these events negatively affected their financial situation, resulting in higher prices and economic stagnation. Shop owners saw reduced access to cheap goods and had to turn to Tripoli to buy their supplies at higher prices. Unlike the Nahr al-Bared merchants, from whom shop owners could buy goods on installment plans, most Tripoli merchants demanded direct payment.”

This dissonance between social integration versus economic integration has been aggravated by the Nahr al-Bared crisis. As more and more soldiers were killed, Bhanine and Bebnine’s residents were grappled with grief and confusion. Soldiers’ parents also felt that they were paying the highest price because their relationship with the camp’s residents has always been somewhat rocky. Paradoxically, many of the fighters that fought the “Fath el Islam” war in

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9 According to our interviews, the price of dentist work in Nahr al-Bared camp is the quarter of the price of that of a dentist in Tripoli.
Bared are from Akkar: the military responsible of Fath El Islam was from Fneideq and his brothers and sisters arrested in Denmark, Germany and Canada on terrorism charges. The media responsible of Fath El Islam was from Michmich and many other simple fighters come from other villages such as Akroum.

Many residents of Bebnine and Bhanin and to a lesser extent of Minieh felt, and continue to feel, that the Syrians favored the Palestinians during their hegemony over Lebanon, while the Lebanese suffered marginalization and oppression. Today, amidst the current crisis in the North, Bebnine’s residents state that the Palestinians are receiving more aid and assistance from international relief agencies, while their deteriorating economic situation goes unnoticed.

Specific Problems Related to the Relationship with the New Camp

There is a serious problem concerning the regularization of the new camp (buildings outside of the camp official boundaries). This new camp was constructed during the last 15 years. The sweeping majority of these constructions are not legally parcellled, according to the Nahr el Bared Reconstruction Commission for Civil Action and Studies in the Adjacent Area (NBRC-CASAA) (2008) study, Preliminary Report on Property Status of Adjacent Area for Destroyed Buildings Statistics, which is based on the field survey that was conducted by this NGO in the Adjacent Area (New camp). (See table below)

**Total numbers of Buildings Demolished:**

323 Buildings (93 of them are the Mhajareen buildings)

**Buildings on Plots that were Legally parcelled**

- Total Number of Buildings : 7
- Lebanese owners : 0
- Palestinian owners : 7

- Legally Registered Contracts : 7
- Non Registered Contract : 0

- Purchase Contracts before 3.4.2001 : 7
- Purchase Contracts after 3.4.2001 : 0

**Buildings on Plots that were Not Legally parcelled**

- Total Number of Buildings : 316
Lebanese owners : 44 (22 of which in name of other)
Palestinian owners : 268 (93 of which in Mhajareen plot)

Purchase Contracts before 3.4.2001 : 312
Purchase Contracts after 3.4.2001 : 4

III. Assessment

Generally speaking, there has been a loss of income due to the interruption of economic activity, a loss of housing and infrastructure, the displacement of populations, and finally human losses, including the rise in the number of disabled. We will divide the assessment into direct and indirect.

Direct Impact

The municipalities of Muhammara and Bebnine-Abdeh are the ones which sustained the largest amount of damages. We can talk about four types of direct impacts: on infrastructure, the fishing sector, the agricultural sector and the trade and business sector.

Infrastructure: Many roads and shops and buildings in the concerned localities were affected, mainly in Muhamara. In this locality, 80 apartments need reparation. Some of the social infrastructure has also been destroyed (schools and health centers), especially in Muhamara. The disturbance in the movement of oil tankers added to the infrastructural damage, especially the reduction in the production capacity of the Deir Ammar power plant which increased power cuts all over the country.

Fishing Sector: In total, the losses of the fishing sector in Bebnine are estimated at US$3.5 million in terms of turnover, and at US$2.9 million in terms of VA and income. (PCM, 2007a) The fishing sector currently consists of small fishing boats owned by fishers themselves. Aside from losing fishing gear and nets, fisherman not only lost their sole source of income during the Nahr al-Bared crisis but also during the July 2006 war, as they were prohibited from going to sea. Sea pollution caused by the Jiyeh oil spill further aggravated the situation, as it resulted in a reduction in fish consumption and demand from the Lebanese population. To top all this, fishers in Lebanon are not subject to the provisions of the National Social Security Fund.

Agriculture Sector: Agriculture suffered from the interruption in the labor supply and the inaccessibility of some farming fields especially in Muhamara, Bebnine and Qobet Bchamra. Some of the green houses were destroyed, mainly in Bebnine.
Trade and Business Sector: Trade sectors were stopped. Muhamara, Bebnine-Abdeh, Qobet shamra, Wadi Jamose and Borg al-Arab have sustained a lot of damage. The regions of Muhammara and Bebnine-Abdeh have sustained heavy damages. Up to 460 businesses employing over 1600 people in the two municipalities have declared stopping operations during the war. (PCM, 2007b)

Also, the fighting in Tripoli in the early days inflicted damages to some buildings and interrupted businesses.

At the sub-regional level, the immediate vicinity of Nahr al-Bared includes the municipalities of Muhammara and Bebnine. These municipalities sustained direct and indirect damages during the fighting, both within their strict boundaries and in the parts of the so-called “new camp” that is under their jurisdiction. The direct damages are mainly in housing and businesses.

Indirect Impact

Interviews with the mayors and civil society actors of the concerned municipalities clearly showed great indirect impact of the crisis on this area. Besides the psychological impact on population and the stress placed on families – especially when their sons are in the army – the interruption of circulation on the highway had a detrimental effect on all businesses directly or indirectly involved in the transport sector for the whole region of Akkar. The transport and trade sector experienced zero traffic on the Northern Border. The conflict led to the diversion of trade from the border passes of Arida and Aboudieh, where 9 percent of exports and 1.2 percent of imports used to transit prior to the conflict.

The Nahr al-Bared Camp crisis both revealed and created social vulnerabilities in the region. Some 68% of the businesses interviewed by the Mada survey (Mouchref, 2008) reported being affected either as a result of direct damage to properties or indirectly through a reduction in productivity; 17.5% also noticed a reduction in the purchasing power of their clients.

The camp played an important role in the regional economy not only as a supplier of labor, but also as a consumer and supply center. The prevalence of shops and businesses in the camp were an important source of goods as they were able to supply goods at a lower cost than their equivalents outside the camp. As such, Nahr el Bared had become a shopping centre for the northern region. The double impact of lost revenue, as result of the interruptions during the crisis, and the loss of the camp as a source of supply, has had a tangible effect on the surrounding communities.

IV. Recovery Strategy

The recovery strategy should deal with the causes of the war and not its effects. Poverty in the region of Akkar is the most acute in the country. Waiting for an elaboration of a national strategy
for rural development to slow down the mechanisms of regional disparity disadvantaging Akkar, the region under study is also needy for a donor intervention. So far, there is little awareness about the devastating consequences of the poverty in Akkar region in general and in the localities of the two rings in particular. Crises like the July 2006 war and that of Nahr al-Bared worsen the vulnerability of this area, particularly because there are high number of the total workers working in the informal sector and engaged in seasonal and temporary jobs (Mouchref, 2008: 28). To that one should add that nearly one-half of the Nahr al-Bared camp dwellers aged 15-64 (47.6 percent both before and after the displacement) were in the labor force (i.e. they were employed or unemployed) who currently have lost their employment and income (Tiltones, 2007) and scattered in the studied area and especially in the Beddawi locality.

There are, as we said before, some recent efforts form the state\textsuperscript{10} and some foundations as well as from the donor community. The last important initiative was that of the Future Movement. Saad Hariri, the leader of this movement, announced from Tripoli in February 2008 a donation of $52 million in development, educational and health projects to commemorate the third anniversary of his father’s assassination. The funding came just weeks after the release of “Poverty, Growth and Income Distribution in Lebanon,” a report coauthored by the UNDP and the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs naming the governorate, or mohafazat, of the North the most impoverished in the country (Long, 2008). (For details about this pledge, see annex in the end of this report)

\textit{On the Short Term}

The short term intervention aims at providing direct assistance to socially weak and vulnerable categories affected by the Nahr al-Bared crisis. Below we suggest some urgent action that must be taken:

- The reconstruction of 80 apartment houses in Muhamara destroyed partially by the fighting.
- Creating a fund for compensating the fishers, farmers and agricultural workers and for provision of basic equipment for them. The distribution of funds should not be according to the number of the population in each locality but according to the incurred damage. Having said that, Muhamarra and Bebnine should be privileged. Micro credit programs for these localities could be very important, especially to the farmers to help improve their green houses.
- Improving the sewage system has not only an impact on the health of the concerned localities but also to the agriculture sector. Projects on sewage for Beqrazlia are very important. Estimated cost is US$ 100,000. However, problems related to swages and potable water are

\textsuperscript{10} Some efforts has been done by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), through the initiatives and program for Integrated and Balanced Regional Development in Baalbeck-Hermel (since 1993), and Southern Lebanon (2000) and from the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), through the Poverty Strategy Initiative which produced the Mapping of Living Conditions in Lebanon (1998) followed by the Preparatory Assistance for Improving Living Conditions of the Poor (1999).
enormous on the coastal villages (mainly first ring village) and are a result of the pollutions that start from the highest altitude villages, it would be pointless to have intervention in coastal villages if the problem is not first solved at high altitude, the “Qamoua” – (entonnoir) is the reservoir for most of Akkar villages and already Michmich has yearly water born diseases and no more potable water like Bebnine.

**Intermediary Steps**

Economic recovery steps should benefit the two existing communities and help in establishing a third. The first two communities concern the agricultural workers and the fishermen, while the third community is more diversified and relates to the tourism sector.

Develop the fishing sector should occur by assisting fishermen in providing better means for fishing and storage of the fish. As the fishers are in the threshold of poverty and cannot apply the Lebanese conversion for shifting, I suggest constructing two basins in the sea in Abdeh (Bebnine) for cultivating fish, to be managed by the cooperation of fishermen. The gain from these two basins can be distributed to all the fishers of the community during the period when the Mediterranean fish is in the process of maturing. This is the only way to convince the fishermen not to fish during this period and to use conventional nets. Improving the fishing port by deepening it is also very important.

Concerning the agricultural sector, our need assessment study as well as many studies done by the UNDP has insisted on the importance of promoting and agro-industries based on domestic agricultural outputs. The same conclusion was reached by the Consultation and Research Institute’s Rapid Social Assessment showing that economic issues related to agricultural related activities should be a top priority for any developmental program that addresses poverty clusters in areas like Akkar (CDI, 2006). Constructing local markets to sell local products in could aid in the enhancement of the economic situation of these areas. Furthermore, this would lead to the empowerment of the women of these localities who often need a place to sell their domestic products. However, instead of constructing one for each municipality, we suggest a regional study in order to establish one or two markets which can serve some municipalities adequately. To offer its local products, each municipality can use the market once or twice a week. As expressed by local actors in Mahamara and Bibnine, it is important to establish a crop nursery in order to maximize seed production, minimize production cost, and finally to ensure good quality and pest-free seeds. The establishment of a soil laboratory in the region is very important since this will help the farmers in producing unique kinds of products. This should be accompanied with a capacity building of farmers about the agriculture techniques and marketing skills but also accompanied with the provision of microcredit programs.

As for Bebnine, it seems that a refrigerator for vegetables is very vital and can help farmers sell their products for a better price when out of season. Interventions to process fruits are prioritized economically. Given the citrus production, and faced with low quality product, it is anticipated that establishing a fruit processing facility with a well designed marketing strategy is a number one development project that would open up new working opportunities, build workers’ capacities, grant women a greater stake and empower their status locally, as well as ensure sustainability for income generation if linked properly to the market. (Fatfat, 2008)
Establishing a cornish for Bebnine, El-Minieh, Mhamra, Nahr al-Bared and Beddawi could constitute a very important project for vitalizing local and international tourism in the region as well as enhancing the well-being of the population. Many tourists may be convinced to spend long vacations in the Akkar area, benefiting from its natural forest reserves as well as its swimming facilities in the Mediterranean Sea. This area has a good location at the cross-roads between Tripoli – the urban city – and the north of Akkar, rural by nature – and displays the typical characteristics of quasi-rural towns that are deeply rooted to agriculture, with an aspiration to benefit from urbanization. In addition to the cornish, initiating some income-generating projects will be helpful to some business to open around the cornish. However this kind of projects should take into account the eco-tourism, providing environmental protection to the fragile ecosystem (Mouchref, 2008: 30). Cleaning the beaches and resolving the sewage system problem are very important tasks which should accompany the construction of the cornish.

Medium and Long Term Steps

Concerning the medium and long term steps, it is very important to create an enabling environment for sustainable development and poverty reduction. The enabling environment would include promoting networking, building capacity and empowering the targeted communities, participation of beneficiaries as well as linking separate interventions under the same framework. However, for us, two issues are with tremendous importance: reproductive health and education.

Reproductive Health and Health Infrastructure

The gap between the nation family average and the studied area is very important (4.6 vs. 6 to 7). Family planning programs are very critical for sustainable development. NGOs’ efforts in this field are sparse. Any program should have two components: the free or low cost provision of contraception medicine as well as awareness. It is preferable to use popular media like television stations to promote them. Prenatal and postnatal care is underdeveloped due to problems of awareness and lack of access to good medical centers. Almost all of these municipalities have requested well-equipped hospitals. I suggest having only one well-equipped hospital or reinforcing medical and surgery services like that of Halba, serving the whole region to the north of Nahr al-Bared. However, in this case a satisfactory road system must be developed.

Education

The concerned municipalities need good infrastructure for schools and especially college level education. The low school enrollment ratio (6-12 years) (83.5% compared to 88.9% for Lebanon) and the high illiteracy rate (10 years and above) (30.5 % compared to 13.6 for Lebanon)\(^{11}\) is mainly caused by the bad school infrastructure in Akkar Area. The Many of the schools in this concerned area do not have even have the regular shape of a school: municipalities usually rent buildings as locations for the schools. Bahnin mayor insisted as first priority the construction of a college in his locality. While there are few private schools in the

\(^{11}\) Source: Mapping of Living Conditions, MOSA - UNDP (1997)
area, the majority of the population there cannot afford the fees of these schools. The importance is to restore the balance between the roles of the private and public sectors in education to reduce the share in households spending - free and compulsory education. Again the relative high cost of the transportation for the poor families seems to be a major factor hindering children to continue their college and secondary schooling. The cost of travel from the locality of second ring to Tripoli to go to university is almost $4 for one forth and back trip. This means a student needs $100 a month. Many families in this region have income not more than $90.

**Regional Level**

The problem of this cluster is that competition is present between them rather than coordination. More than 6 sport stadium were requested by the Moyers in such small area. What is needed is definitely a regional project of development, which will benefit all the concerned municipalities. The World Bank should also coordinate with the Council for Development and Reconstruction, Hariri foundation, the UNDP and the EU to see what kind of intervention will be initiated. Saad Hariri promised a $52 million package for Akkar which included a milk product factory (see in the annex the details about Hariri Pledge).

Coordination between different municipalities could be part of a project of capacity building for these municipalities which addresses the elaboration of sustainable strategies for municipal services, the development of fiscal collection capacity.

**Improving the Relationship with the Camp**

As we mentioned before, the camp had been integrated economically but not socially or urbanely. The objective of the recovery strategy should occur on two fronts: rehabilitating the social relationship between camp dwellers and residents of the surrounding areas and completing the urban integration of the camp through infrastructure projects and economic regional planning. The stereotypes and prejudices between the two communities are very recurrent and the risk of clashes in the future is very high and grave. The improvement of the relationship between the concerned localities with both the new and old Nahr al-Bared camp is vital. I suggest four levels of intervention:

- Increasing the social ties, connections and contacts: scouting, cultural and sport projects connecting young Palestinians with their neighbor Lebanese peers come with very high importance. There are many NGOs and grassroots organizations in the area which are interested in such projects. While the Palestinian camps had community centers for multiple activities, these kinds of centers are not very developed in the surrounding areas. Such projects should not wait until the Nahr al-Bared camp is reconstructed for them to occur. Young Palestinians are already living in the Beddawi camp and the new camp of Nahr al-Bared.
• A master plan including sewage systems, drinking water and electricity should connect the camp to its surrounding urban fabric. Generally speaking, any development plan for the region should include the camp area. In the long-term run, this will be extremely important in terms of the human relationship between the Palestinians and the Lebanese.

• A cornish expanded from Badawi to Qobet Bchamra may properly serve to connect people together.

• As the new camp (buildings outside of the camp official boundaries) is located in the land of Muhamara and Bhnine, a new relationship should be established between the population and representatives of the camp with these two municipalities. This relationship should be based on duties and rights: in other words, the municipalities could provide services (electricity and water system, sewage, garbage collect) and the new camp dwellers could pay taxes in return. However, there is a need for lands to be parcelled and legalized this area in order to enable the reconstruction of the 323 demolished plots/buildings there.

As indicators of progress, one can use the number of projects connecting the camp with the surrounding area, the number of encounters between young Palestinians and Lebanese and the number of plots/buildings parcelled in the new camp.

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Annex

*Tables and graphs*

Table 1: size of each municipality and the annual budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Registered Population</th>
<th>Annual budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Circle</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beddawi</td>
<td>10,678</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mounieh</td>
<td>31,292</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhanine</td>
<td>7,028</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deir Ammar</td>
<td>11913 (4713 in election register)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebnine</td>
<td>21,722</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouhammara</td>
<td>2,424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2d Circle</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aayoun Ghozlan(^{12})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raouda**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beit el hash**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranaiyé**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakour</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>66,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miniara</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bqerzla</td>
<td>2500(^{13})</td>
<td>108,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahr Ayas**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Qarqaf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Touma</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majdala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{12}\) Municipality is under restructuration.
\(^{13}\) According to the Mayer, Number of migrants are around 10,000.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>** Source: no Municipality**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borj El Arab</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bzal</td>
<td>3555</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Rihanie</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deir Dalloum</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halba</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>213,333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 1

Source: Nehmeh 2007
Source: Mouchref, 2008

Graph 2
**Hariri Pledge**

MP Saad Hariri announced during his meetings the granting of 30 million dollars aide for dire educational and health projects that were supposed to be carried out by the State but couldn’t be implemented due to the lack of the necessary funds. These amounts will be dedicated to establish and equip a number of schools and health centers in the North region.

These projects include:
- The appropriation of lands and the equipment of four large schools in Tripoli. These schools located in the areas of Bab al-Tabaneh, Qubbah and Haddadine can take in around 9000 students.
- Building and furnishing 12 schools in the Qaza of Akkar that can receive around 6000 schools.
- Supplying 3 schools and building and supplying a public school in al-Minyeh – Al-Dineyeh Qaza that would receive 1500 students.
- Build and equip a public school in Tannourine town – Al-Batroun Qaza, and build and furnish Batroun Health center.
- Finance the building and furnishing of a special center for education and culture under the supervision and sponsorship of Deputy House Speaker Farid Makari.

MP Hariri also announced a number of developmental, social and agricultural projects that will be executed this year with a cost of 15 million dollars in the municipalities of Akkar and Minnieh. These projects include:
- Establishing a social observatory and a center for vocational training in Bab al-Tabaneh in Tripoli.
- A Fish farm in the town of Sheikh Znad - Akkar.
- A center for fodder production in Akkar.
- Vegetables and fruits Market in the town of Bebnine – Akkar.
- A center for sorting, packing and freezing fruits in the town of Fneidek – Akkar.
- A center for milk storage in Dureib – Akkar.
- A center for producing dairy products in the town of Minieh.
- Food canning unit in the town of Bkarsouna- Dineyeh.
- A center for sorting, packing and freezing fruits in Taran- Minnieh Qaza.
- A Multipurpose incubator center in Tripoli.
- Offering Al-Mina Municipality 3 million dollars to help it in evacuating Khan Tamathili in al-Mina to turn it into a hotel, conferences halls and an art gallery.

MP Hariri also announced the start of work in King Fahed Park in Tripoli, in coordination with Tripoli’s municipality. The cost of the park is estimated at around 5 million dollars over an area of 17 thousand square meters.

He also announced a plant park over an area of 27 thousand square meters within the Rashid Karami International Exhibition with a cost of two million dollars, in cooperation with the exhibition administration.

Thus, the value of the projects submitted by MP Hariri equals 52 million dollars.\(^\text{14}\)

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