



CASE STUDY 2

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Project Title:

RIGHTS BASED ADVOCACY IN LEBANON (2013-2018)

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AL HARAKE BARAKE “MOVEMENT IS LIFE”: DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCACY CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL is a US-based global development organization that has worked in 75 countries during our 55-year existence, administering nearly 500 USG-funded programs valued at more than \$800 million. From 2009 – 2016, Counterpart administered USAID’s Global Civil Society Strengthening Leader with Associates (GCSS-LWA) award. As USAID’s primary civil society strengthening partner, Counterpart managed a consortium of ten partners and implemented 36 associate programs valued at approximately \$350 million in over 60 countries. Through the GCSS-LWA, Counterpart and our partner Management Systems International (MSI) were awarded the BALADI CAP program. Due to its long history in country, MSI assumed an in-country technical implementation role. The program, which started in 2013, had three primary components: Capacity Building Component (CBC), Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI), and the Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance (CEDG) Component. The research, analysis, and reporting conducted through this assignment relates directly to the CEDG component and seeks to provide project partners with strategic insight, learning and recommendations through the completion of BALADI CAP and on future programs of a similar nature.

BEYOND GROUP is a mission-driven consulting firm specializing in policy research, public management, capacity development and partnership building. Beyond Group is renowned for its ability to bridge global knowledge with the Arab context, its partnership mindset, and its experiential methodologies. As part of our Policy Research service, Beyond Group undertakes interdisciplinary policy research using frameworks and methodologies tailored for each context and initiative to support policy makers and international agencies in finding viable, innovative and evidence-based solutions to socio-economic problems, and the challenges of governance and development. Using qualitative and quantitative research tools, we conduct policy analysis and evaluation, develop policy solutions, and implement perception studies and impact assessments. Through our Partnership Building services, Beyond Group offers support to design participatory and innovative strategies and tactics to engage stakeholders, be it governments, public institutions, civil society organizations, private sector corporations and communities. Through this engagement we help build partnerships with shared values and purpose, driven by service to lead political, policy and institutional transformations throughout the MENA region.

CASE STUDIES IN LEBANESE CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY. Within the framework of the USAID Baladi CAP project, Counterpart International supported a research project on civil society advocacy in Lebanon, with the goal of broadening the democratic space for citizen participation in public affairs by creating platforms for informed public debate and increased citizen engagement outside of sectarian and confessional lines. Selected through an open competition, BRD undertook a mapping of advocacy campaigns in Lebanon 2013-18 and together with Counterpart developed five case studies in an effort to highlight best practices and common factors contributing to civil society advocacy’s success or failure and enhancing an understanding of the needs of CSOs working on advocacy to further advance rights and reform in Lebanon.

All final case studies will be posted on the website of Beyond Group at:

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CAMPAIGN ISSUE AND CONTEXT

The document of the National Accord which was signed on October 22, 1989 in Taif city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by the living members of the 1972 parliament, brought an end to 15 years of the Lebanese Civil War. Without reconciliation amongst its people, the country was in full operation again and government institutions took shape and started functioning normally.

However, with the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq el Hariri on February 14, 2005 and allegations pointing at the Syrian regime and Hezbollah, the country yet again got divided vertically. The hate instigating discourses and the political division continued to intensify until May 7, 2008 when it took a violent route on the streets of Beirut between Hizbollah and the Future Movement. Sunni groups in Tripoli reacted few days after, May 10 in particular, and the Alawite Jabal Mohsen, Hezbollah's ally in the city, was attacked leading to few casualties and injuries among the residents. This attack marked the first in a series of 22 rounds of clashes between the Sunni areas of Bab El Tabbaneh, Qobbe, and Baddawi from one side and the predominantly Alawite Jabal Mohsen from another. These clashes were again exacerbated in 2011 by the war in Syria as groups got divided again between those supporting the Syrian regime and those against it, translating these positions into a show of force on the ground. This in turn, led to an increase in the intensity of the clashes leaving more destruction and casualties among the two sides.

On April 1, 2014 the Government of Lebanon (GoL) headed by Prime Minister Tammam Salam started implementing a security plan in Tripoli putting an end to the numerous rounds of clashes and returning normalcy to the city. The clashes have left behind hundreds of families living in an extremely dire economic situation and increased the number of disabled individuals living in the city. Although this security plan has brought calm to the city, it did not yet bring much focus of development work to neither the economic nor the social levels. To complement the security apparatus, local civil society activists and NGOs started carrying out rehabilitation projects, community activities, and advocacy actions to look into enhancing the basic conditions of the people living in the city and promote their engagement in a long term reconciliation process.



Figure 1. Tripoli map showing the conflict zones
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/19/lebanon-sectarian-attacks-tripoli>

A MOVEMENT EMERGES FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS

During the conflict analysis research conducted as part of “The Roadmap to Reconciliation in Tripoli (RRT)”¹ which was later complemented by another conflict assessment done for the UNDP Peacebuilding Program, activists and NGOs under the RRT came to a realization that the most recurrent concern from the people they interviewed and met with (over 35), focused on people who were severely injured following the clashes in Tripoli. “The scars of war in their case [aren’t] a matter of perceptions or opinions but rather real pain that influences their livelihoods, health, psychological wellbeing and much more” said one of the lead researchers in the RRT.

This information was validated by representatives and local staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) in Tripoli, the official institution responsible for caring for individuals with disabilities (including people with disabilities injured during the clashes), who confirmed that the category including individuals injured and/or disabled from the clashes are among the most vulnerable and impoverished living in the city. Therefore, addressing the rights of people with disabilities as a cause became an integral component of the efforts aiming to launch a grassroots reconciliation process by the RRT partners and supported by both UNDP and MOSA. This was when the efforts to create a joint

¹ The “Roadmap to Reconciliation in Tripoli,” (RRT) project is a grassroots initiative that aims at launching a transitional justice route through understanding the public perceptions in Tripoli about reconciliation as well as people’s readiness and willingness to engage in a communal reconciliation process once launched. https://citiesintransition.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/the-roadmap-to-reconciliation-in-tripoli_may20171.pdf

Sunni-Alawite committee of individuals physically disabled as a result of the clashes to advocate for the rights of all their peers was launched, which was later called Al Harake Barake (Movement is Life). The Movement received support from UNDP’s Mechanisms for Social Stability (MSS) project in Tripoli implemented in partnership with MOSA. The latter supported the outreach to key individuals who can contribute by being part of the committee to support in the advocacy efforts.

Capitalizing on MOSA’s experience with and network of people affected by the conflict, the responsibility of selecting around 15 members of the community to form the Al Harake Barake was theirs. After a series of facilitated sessions and trainings funded by UNDP and hosted by the MOSA Social Development Centers (SDC), the committee developed the following theory of change and objectives:

“If Al Harake Barake committee of the people disabled from the Tripoli clashes continues to advocate for basic rights and services, then they will be able to highlight the needs of a larger base of the people with disabilities in Tripoli and represent them creating a community of both Sunnis and Alawites working for a common cause, because there was never such an inclusive approach to get them to work together especially that a main partner on this initiative is the Ministry of Social Affairs which is partially responsible for some of these services.”

Once their theory of change was developed the committee with the support of UNDP’s consultant and MOSA had several discussion sessions and agreed on the following objectives:

LEGAL	ECONOMIC	HEALTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Lebanese State through the relevant official institutions to issue the necessary decrees for the implementation of Law 220/2000² which guarantees the right to work for people with disabilities through a 3% quota in public and private institutions. • Advocate to MOSA to reconsider the criteria set for identifying people with disabilities to include a larger number of individuals, specifically those affected by violent conflicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate both public and private institutions in Tripoli to start implementing Law 220/2000 even before issuing the implementing decrees. This contributes to improving the lives of tens of families affected by the clashes and strengthens social stability. • Work closely with the municipality of Tripoli to ensure that people with disabilities have can rent kiosks or shops in public markets provided by the municipality, to have a small income that could enhance their economic situation. • Request a limited financial assistance card for the people with disabilities in Tripoli, which can be covered through donations from the international community. • Work with local associations, institutes and the Social Development Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs to create and provide specialized empowerment trainings programs for people with disabilities who wish to acquire any skills or knowledge that will improve their employment opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that health institutions, whether governmental or private, meet the needs of people with disabilities either by activating the card for people with disabilities or by having the Ministry of Health provide them with the necessary medication. • Link the health service providers to people with disabilities, who were mapped through the project to meet their needs in case of emergency through the available resources. • Advocating for people with disabilities to receive basic coverage from the National Social Security Fund. • Developing social centers or clubs close to the areas of residence for the people with disabilities in order to provide them with psychosocial support.

Al Harake Barake evolved into a local advocacy campaign calling for the rights of the people who were physically affected by the conflict in Tripoli. Since the campaign had among its members, ex-fighters, it was important to manage internal dynamics (Sunni – Alawite) with the support of an external consultant who helped the group through

² Disability Rights Act No. 220/2000. Article 74 of this law obligated private-sector employers who have at least 30 workers to employ disabled persons in accordance with specific ratios (one for a staff of 30 to 60 workers, or 3% for a staff of more than 60 workers). <http://legal-agenda.com/en/article.php?id=3627>

facilitating their meetings, guiding them through their strategy, and equipping them with the needed skills to present themselves to their community. Many community members blamed these advocates for the clashes as they were directly involved in violence, so it was important that community members accepted that these fighters are now involved in advocacy work calling for law implementation.

This case study was chosen among selected campaigns as it brings forward several lessons learned around:

- Partnerships with government for advocacy
- Engaging the affected people directly in the campaign
- Linking local efforts to national ones
- Ensuring cohesion among a group of former rivals
- Engaging the most vulnerable community members in structured and organized advocacy work
- Building a comprehensive evidence-based advocacy case and the usage of data

ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The process of forming and empowering Al Harake Barake local committee included the following:

- Building on the existing RRT research as well as the UNDP Tripoli Conflict Assessment to better understand the root causes and outcomes, as well as, the impact of the sectarian clashes on physically affected individuals;
- Forming a committee from people with disabilities representing the different conflicting neighborhoods in Tripoli, as well as the two conflicting sects (Sunni & Alawite), and finally comprising of both men and women and have contacts within their community for outreach purposes;
- Training the committee members to take part in the development and execution of surveys and mapping of cases, reflecting on the data collecting and analyzing results, and interview and communications skills;
- Raising their awareness on the basic information related to the Law 220/2000;
- Contributing to the committee's psychosocial well-being in an effort to build cohesion between them;
- Equipping them with key social (communications, presentation of the team, facilitating meetings, etc.) and technical skills (filling the questionnaire, asking questions, preparing CVs, preparing for interviews, etc.) to become better advocates of their own cause;
- Conducting door-to-door surveys to document cases of injured people with disabilities that were forbidden from continuing their work.
- Meeting key decision-makers to advocate for the campaign objectives stated above.

Building an evidence-based advocacy case

In order to gain traction on the implementation of Article 24 of Law 220/2000, Al Harake Barake had to present evidence-based data and information resorting to two main resources:

- Existing researches: based on the RRT research and the conflict analysis of Tripoli
- New data: through door-to-door data collection interviews

Starting with the RRT research which took over 6 months to be completed and the conflict assessment phase that took around 2 months. These phases engaged over 350 individuals in the city, primarily living on the former conflict zones. Later, upon the decision to establish the committee as an MSS, clear criteria were set by UNDP and MOSA to ensure equity in representation and ability to achieve impact. In consultation with MOSA, 15 members of the community were met representing the following:

- Sunnis and Alawites
- Men and women

- Physically disabled during the clashes
- Have a wide network of connections within their neighborhoods

The process was highly participatory as the committee formed worked closely with MOSA and the RRT team to develop a detailed questionnaire that was answered by the people through door-to-door interviews. The data was then presented by the team to several UNDP staff, local NGOs, donor organizations, and MOSA to align their understanding on the situation and highlight the priorities for intervention. But even before that very important set of data recording for the first time the information about the disabled from clashes in the city, other information and analysis took place that contributed to making this initiative an evidence-based advocacy case.

Later, these members were invited by RRT team and UNDP's consultant to a series of meetings during which they were introduced to the project, the process, and objectives. Eight out of the fifteen agreed to join the process as committee members while some of the others expressed their availability to support without being committed. Others decided not to join as they believed that this process will be a waste of time for them and that they expect jobs or food/non-food rations to assist them, as explained by one of the interviewees. For those who accepted to join, a short training was given by members of the RRT team on community engagement and data collection so that they can take part in the mapping of cases.

The surveying process started in mid-August 2017 and took around one month to complete during which 8 of the committee members along with MOSA staff went through a door-to-door interviewing process to map more than 120 individuals with disabilities caused during the clashes. The teams were divided as per the neighborhoods they represented to capitalize on their network, maintain trust, and allow for an ease of access to people. "We found out that the age range of people with injuries that led to disabilities was between 4 and 82 years old. This meant that among those affected were children who were one year old when they were injured." Having the social workers from the MOSA SDC join during visits allowed for a firsthand validation of the data, giving additional credibility to their efforts.

The combination of reports in addition to the mapping results and personal testimonials equipped the campaign's team with enough information and evidence that special attention should be given to cater for the dire economic and social status of people with disabilities from the Tripoli clashes. In addition to this, the data set they have collected allowed them to connect these people with programs led by other donors and INGOs whether they were on vocational training, access to employment, health support, or psychosocial support.

During the mapping, the team made sure to focus on:

- People's stories on how and where they got injured and the type of disability they have
- Demographics
- Contact information
- Social, economic, and health needs
- Previous and current employment
- Education level
- How did this injury weaken them or made them stronger?
- What are their current priorities?
- Do they know about Law 220/2000?

Thinking and working politically

For each of the objectives set for the campaign, the team mapped the relevant key stakeholders and decision-makers they should engage with. For issues linked to employability, the team noted the importance of meeting with and engaging the Ministry of Labor, for the legal part and the implementation of Law 220/2000, it was important to meet with the Minister of Social Affairs since the Ministry is the key entity responsible for protecting the rights of people with disabilities. At the local level, they engaged the Municipality of Tripoli and local private and public institutions. Different tactics (telephone calls, in-person visits, letters, invitation to events...) were used to engage these decision-makers depending on the role they played. While the MoSA SDC staff were engaged from the beginning, their commitment to the process was encouraged by a partnership between the UNDP (the initial donor) and the Ministry for its interest to play a more direct role with the beneficiaries at the local level. The engagement of MoSA early on in the process increased their ownership of the process and hence they saw themselves as one team with the campaign leads. This has paved the way for the committee to meet with the Director General of MOSA, present the data they gathered from the research and ask him to support them by pushing forward for the implementation of Law 220/2000; in addition to revising the criteria set for identifying people with disabilities to include those injured during clashes, and to cater for their needs and include them as priority beneficiaries within MOSA's programs. Right after the formation of the new government in January 2019, the team invited the Minister of Social Affairs to a local conference highlighting the process of work, the objectives of the campaign, and sharing testimonials from committee members. During this conference the Minister promised to follow up closely with the committee as well as with his colleague the new Minister of Labor to ensure that the necessary decrees would be issued to ensure the implementation of Law 220/2000.

It is important to note that the Harake Barake team sent several requests to engage the previous Minister of Labor in the process to align on the ministry’s vision and to understand the needed steps for the Law 220/2000 to be implemented; however, the minister was not responsive and the meetings never took place. The campaign continues to be active as this case is being written and follow up meetings with the ministers are to be planned.

At the local level, the campaign’s team met with the Mayor of Tripoli and members of the municipal council including the only member with disabilities within the council. During this meeting the head of the municipality committed to form a municipal committee to follow up with Al Harake Barake on the progress of work and support them. The mayor also promised to accommodate the recruitment of 3% individuals with disabilities in the municipality which was seen as a great success for the campaign but the municipality later on faced difficulties in implementing this decision because of the bureaucratic and mundane process to recruit which hindered the municipality’s progress on this front. During the time of writing this case the mayor was replaced and the team planned to meet with the new mayor to relaunch the discussion.

The campaign also identified 10 various private sector businesses in Tripoli to visit and motivate them to start implementing Law 220/2000, while they get matched with people with disabilities who have the right set of skills for their company. The companies expressed interest in supporting the campaign and understanding the importance of this move, however, only one of them recruited from the provided pool of applicants.

Engaging and mobilizing constituencies

An integral component of the campaign was the messages it was delivering and the tactics the team used to deliver these messages. Right from the beginning, the team wanted to make sure that all committee members voice the same message as to why they came together in the first place.

“We wanted both the decision makers and the general public to connect with personal stories and understand their suffering, hence we documented 7 different testimonials in an attempt to bring our campaign closer to people’s attention”. Campaign member.

Throughout the campaign there were many voices from the community against the team especially that their focus was to support those who were injured during the clashes. “We were told many times that we shouldn’t support former fighters as they were the reason why the city had suffered for years” explained one team member. It was important therefore, to highlight the stories of the committee members through the media, and to give them the opportunity to be seen as equal once again. In order to engage the general public, a full branding and visibility campaign took place including the decision on the name of the campaign, the logo, and visual materials such as the brochures, an



animation video, 7 short stories about individuals who were injured during the clashes and were left with certain disabilities all of which were shared through the campaign’s social media platforms.

While external communication was very important for the success of the campaign to change the public perception towards ex-fighters or people from the area that were previously known as the war frontline fighters of Tripoli, internal communications was equally necessary. Committee members as mentioned earlier represented the different sects and neighborhoods of Tripoli. Some of them were fighters while others were victims. Paying very close attention to the group dynamics was essential to allow people to speak their minds and open up at the same time to listen to the other. “We were not taken by surprise that only 8 people accepted to commit to working together; people still hold grudges, the wounds caused by the conflict are still deep and their scars still hurt” explained another member of the committee. “If there is no will to open your heart and accept the other, reconciliation and peace won’t be achieved,” he continued. The close follow-up and coaching of the committee members, through the facilitation of meetings and informal conversations, in addition to the creation of a common WhatsApp group slowly allowed the committee members to better understand and sympathize with each other, reaching an agreement that they are living the same conditions, they are all equally vulnerable, and that only together they can overcome their suffering.

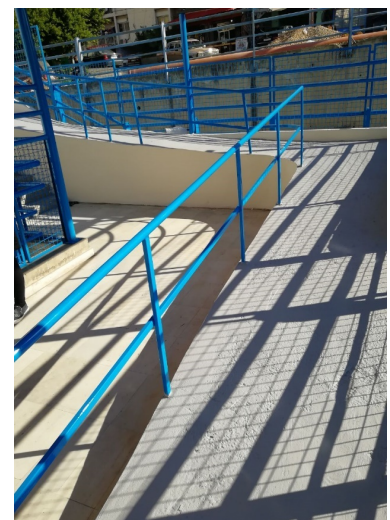


Figure 1. Ramp at the entrance of the MOSA SDC

As MOSA was hosting the campaign's meetings at its center in Qobbeh, it was integral that the committee members felt comfortable accessing the center. This was not the case as the right of wheelchairs users was not guaranteed. This by itself was a point that has pushed several members of the committee away thinking that the main public institution responsible for protecting their rights does not provide reasonable accommodation and accessibility. To counter that, the campaign's team invited them to a brainstorming session to come up with solutions to overcome this challenge. They then managed to secure from UNDP a small funding to rehabilitate the entrance of the SDC center and introducing a ramp while at the same time equipping the toilets at the center with the necessary tools to make them accessible. Achieving this gave moral support to the committee members that they are being heard and their rights respected.

Developing Local Capacity for Sustained Reform

As this campaign focused on both behavioral and policy change, it was essential for the campaign team that both of them and the committee members have the right set of skills to manage the campaign and to equally contribute to its success. At the same time, all committee members live under poverty lines and are among the most vulnerable members of Tripoli, therefore it was understood from the beginning that this will not be an "elitist" type of campaign that engages seasoned advocates. Acknowledging that, all the trainings and capacity building sessions were tailored to accommodate their needs, skills, attention span, and even the time they could allocate to attend such sessions. Most sessions took place on Friday mornings before the prayers in order to not jeopardize the time during which they could be generating income.

The team nevertheless resorted to a hands-on approach that focused on exposing these individuals to other experiences either through visits such as that to Arc en Ciel's workshop of people with disabilities in Beirut, or watching documentaries and stories of people with disabilities who have succeeded. The team also worked on building their confidence that advocacy is feasible and might actually lead to successes. Furthermore, and to better prepare them for the labor market, community members with disabilities attended training and coaching sessions on basic business and employability skills such as basic communications, work ethics, time management, anger management, interviewing skills, and were supported by the team to prepare CVs for them and share them with private and public sector organizations. Legal sessions were also organized with the lawyer to raise their awareness on the law 220/2000 and how it protects their rights and that through its implementation their situation might be different.

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

During its five months of implementation the campaign has achieved some success while facing lots of challenges. Looking at both allowed the team behind it and the committee to deduce lessons learned to be shared with other campaigns and to be taken into account by the group while they continue working on the issue. The below depicts each of these points:

SUCCESSSES

- **Developing Trust with the Government:** Through the partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs a lot of credibility was given to the process and also helped in restoring some of the trust that was lost between the community and government. This has also contributed to strengthening the foundations for a long-term reconciliation process, as one of the main pillars was the trust in the government and its local representative institutions.
- **Building Strong Relations with the Community:** The campaign has been led by the disabled people themselves defending their rights which in turn contributed to a change in perceptions among those who were accusing the campaign of defending ex-fighters. At the same time, strong relationships developed between the committee members themselves who come from different sectarian backgrounds and were able to work together, advocate together, and succeed together.

"We were never this organized and diverse in the past when we were voicing our demands, in fact we used to call in vein for years but now we might be a powerful group since we represent both Sunni and Alawite victims" said one member of the committee.

"As a former leader of a group of fighters, I never thought I would go into Jabal Mohsen. Now and because of this group, I go there every week to attend the basketball training" former fighter.

- **Partnering with INGOs and Donor Agencies:** The successes throughout the process has encouraged some INGOs such as the ICRC to work with the group by accepting referrals to cases that needed surgeries or artificial limbs maintenance. A wheelchair basketball team under the name Harake Barake was formed as part of the ICRC's program, to help them with the psychosocial and health aspects and is now being trained on weekly basis. In addition to that, donor agencies such as USAID supported the group through local NGOs to enhance or develop their own small businesses.
- **Raising Awareness:** The campaign helped to raised awareness among private sector companies about the law and the importance of its implementation; in addition to spreading this knowledge among the advocates themselves. This also contributed to the efforts done by national campaigns calling for the implementation of the law.
- **Equipping a Team of Unexperienced Advocates:** The training and coaching that was given to the team has raised their self-confidence that they are both socially and economically equal contributors to this country, putting them at the forefront of the campaign, meeting people, and standing strong. Such efforts contributed to one person with disabilities getting employed in one of the companies that the campaign had reached out to.

CHALLENGES

- **Lack of trust in the government:** There is no doubt that as mentioned earlier the lack of attention from the government towards this community group has increased the gap between the two and positioned people with disabilities as rivals to the government. In order to mitigate this challenge the committee relied a lot on the presence of the MOSA teams to work closely with the beneficiaries, support them, build personal relations with them and join them in all activities including the wheelchair basketball trainings. Seeing the MOSA staff next to them throughout the process allowed the committee members to feel equal and regain some of the trust that was lost in public institutions. MOSA employees supported the committee to meet highest MOSA figures including the Director General and the Minister. But that indeed remains a fragile relationship if MOSA does not consistently address the priorities of the overall beneficiaries' base.

- **Lack of trust in NGOs and the Donor Community:** the beneficiaries have suffered rounds of disappointments from NGOs and INGOs over the years. Several interviewees repeated how "they take pictures of us to report to their donors but don't actually work with us or provide us with anything." Throughout the process of this campaign members of the RRT proved to committee members that generalization does not always work as they managed to link them with training programs, business development programs, and even health support programs. A key to that was the approach of getting the committee members to be the face of the campaign and not any local NGO or individual activist.

"Changing behaviors is equally important to implementing or changing policy within an advocacy process. We realized we can't push for implementation of the law if potential employees are not equipped with the right life skills to join the workforce. We had to revise our plans and actions to focus on psychosocial support to contribute to a positive attitude while in parallel working on employability skills" consultant working with the committee.

- **Lack of knowledge of Law 220/2000:** As they started working with people with disabilities in the community, the team realized that the committee itself along with over 90% of surveyed beneficiaries were not aware of the disability rights law 220/2000. A lot of efforts and several sessions with lawyer were made to raise awareness of the issue and explain the law to ensure that they are on the same page in terms of what rights this law grants. The hardest part was to simplify a very complex and comprehensive law drafted in standard Arabic to mostly an illiterate audience.

- **Accessibility of the MOSA center:** While MOSA was the main counterpart and partner on this project, and the host of the committee meetings, people with disabilities struggled to access the center as it was not properly equipped to host them. Some committee members protested that and discussed moving the meetings outside the SDC stating that such a partnership would not work if they were not respected. To counter that, the committee worked closely with the UNDP to ensure funding to renovate the center's entrance and toilets to make them accessible.

- **Lack of communication skills:** Although the committee members were trained to maintain the social media platforms and to design their messages in a positive tone, the committee was still not capable of managing its communications platform. The person who was most knowledgeable found a full time job and was not able to invest more time on it. This continues to be a key challenge today as their Facebook page is not being updated regularly.

- **Managing expectations:** Despite the fact that the campaign leads explained that the focus of the campaign is not only economic or only about increasing employability, community members had their expectations high on that front. The lack of responsiveness of both the private and public sectors to ensure employment had let

down many committee members and led some to drop out from attending and participating in meetings or other activities.

- **Inability to link to national campaigns:** Due to the short time frame in which this campaign was implemented and the lack of responsiveness of NGOs operating at the national level, it was hard for the committee to expand beyond Tripoli. Efforts continue to be put to reach out to members of national campaigns to join forces towards the implementation of Law 220 or at least to keep the beneficiaries engaged in nationwide developments of its implementation progress.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Small Wins to Maintain Momentum:** When engaging with non-activists in the traditional sense or those who understand that advocacy is a long term effort, there needs to be small wins during the process. This will give the campaign members a chance to feel the importance of what they are doing. For instance, the rehabilitation of the MOSA center gave them a bigger push to keep going to meetings and contributing to the process. Managing to secure a job opportunity for a beneficiary from outside the committee gave them a lot of pride that they are achieving what they committed to with their community members, in addition to exposing them to other success stories of sustainable enterprises or initiatives for a similar cause such as the Arc en Ciel workshop visit. It gave them hope that they too can grow and achieve if they had enough patience and perseverance.
- **Creating a common identity and sense of belonging:** Visibility is important, coming up with a name and a logo gave the group an identity and a sense of belonging and reflected their goals, priorities and culture. Coupling that with visual aids such as brochures, videos, pins, vests and name tags allowed them to be identified within their community as agents of change rather than “ex-fighters” or “unproductive disabled” hence positively contributing to their psychosocial well-being and commitment to the process.
- **Evidence-based advocacy case:** Having arguments based on numbers, legal text, and testimonials from the people positions the committee as strong advocates who have done their homework well. This gave them a stronger position when meeting with the Minister and Director General of MOSA, the Mayor of Tripoli, and public and private sector institutions. They talked on behalf of over 120 individuals who were injured during the clashes in an effort to transform forever the lives of these beneficiaries.
- **Ensuring linkages to local initiatives:** The organizers realized the importance of linking the movement to other local initiatives and INGOs to ensure some diversification of experiences and sustainability. Through connecting them with the local NGO SHIFT, they managed to apply to business support programs and receive in-kind grants to start small scale businesses, they also managed to connect with ICRC to receive medical support to change or check on their artificial limbs where applicable as well as the sponsorship of the wheelchair basketball team.
- **Focusing Objectives:** It was realized throughout the process that ensuring employability will be a very challenging objective taking into consideration the unidentified local market needs in Tripoli, the growing competition over jobs, and the psychosocial conditions of those disabled from the clashes. It became apparent to the team that for proper job placements, the beneficiaries should undergo rounds of preparations for the labor market, including close coaching to reshape their attitudes from aggressive and angry individuals raging against the system to cooperative and productive ones. Once that is achieved they could compete over jobs and might be better positioned to convince institutions to employ them.
- **Formalizing the Committee:** It became apparent to the team that the committee on its own cannot sustain itself without funding and a lead organization to support it. Linking it to NGOs and INGOs managed to keep it going thus far, at the same time for it to be able to continue working on the objectives they set at the beginning of the project there needs to be a formal body hosting them, joining the umbrella of national advocacy work, and getting the necessary training and capacity building to not only manage but also lead such advocacy initiatives.



THE WAY FORWARD

Upon conversations with members of Al Harake Barake and their partners on the project there was a general agreement that the movement shall continue. However, for it to be able to do so it needs to continue to present itself as the local movement of people with disabilities who survived rounds of conflicts and now have a positive outlook towards the future. The committee plans to continue its efforts to meet with key decision makers and stakeholders to push forward their agenda, more specifically as one of the coordination committee members noted, they plan to meet with the new mayor of Tripoli in the hopes that he would be more cooperative than the previous one. Parallel to this, the movement plans to intensify its meetings with private sector companies especially in light of the new measure taken by the Ministry of Labor to regulate informal foreign labor, hence providing a bigger opportunity for Lebanese citizens to find jobs. Through the support of current SDC staff they plan to meet again with the Director General of MOSA and the Minister to keep on their issue on the table.

Should they prove successful on the long run and with enough support and capacity building the current committee wishes to register as an official NGO allowing them to enter more formal networks and compete for funding.

ANNEX I: MOVEMENT IS LIFE (AL HARAKE BARAKE)



ENDNOTES

¹ The “Roadmap to Reconciliation in Tripoli,” (RRT) project is a grassroots initiative that aims at launching a transitional justice route through understanding the public perceptions in Tripoli about reconciliation as well as people’s readiness and willingness to engage in a communal reconciliation process once launched.

https://citiesintransition.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/the-roadmap-to-reconciliation-in-tripoli_may20171.pdf

¹ Disability Rights Act No. 220/2000. Article 74 of this law obligated private-sector employers who have at least 30 workers to employ disabled persons in accordance with specific ratios (one for a staff of 30 to 60 workers, or 3% for a staff of more than 60 workers). <http://legal-agenda.com/en/article.php?id=3627>