



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**LEBANON**

## SNAPSHOT

USAID sponsored the Naseej Conference to bring together Lebanese and Syrian committees and promote social cohesion in northern Lebanon.



*Lebanese and Syrian committee representatives present their ideas to donors and other organizations.*

*“The conference made us realize that we are imposing a huge burden on the host community in underprivileged villages. We hope this conference will lead to action.”*

*-- Syrian committee member*

*“Now that we carried out an assessment, we know what we want and what to ask for.”*

*--Lebanese committee member*

**Telling Our Story**  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

## Conference Promotes Social Cohesion

**January 2014** - Local organization Al Hadatha Association is working to promote social cohesion in northern Lebanon through the creation of mixed Lebanese and Syrian community committees. These committees came together at the Naseej Conference on October 30th, 2013, along with donors and international organizations, to discuss local needs and potential solutions. The conference was attended by more than 200 people, including representatives of the United Nations, European Union, and other international organizations. USAID's Office of Transition initiatives (OTI) designed the activity and provided all support for the trainings, conference logistics, participant transportation, and related information products.

Both Lebanese and Syrian members presented on behalf of their committees. The local follow up from the conference has been swift and effective due to the prioritization of trainings and assessments before the conference. As a result of the trainings, the committees were able to conduct needs assessments in their villages, determine priority issues, and then use the conference to propose and prioritize solutions. Since then, several community activities have been funded by donors. Examples of these activities include the funding of a vocational school in the village of Mechmech and the provision of garbage trucks and water tank vehicles in the village of Mhamara, funded by UN agencies.

The conference was a platform to launch several trainings designed to create and support the committees of Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, and municipality representatives in 13 villages in Akkar. These villages in particular are facing serious resource, economic, and social strains as a result of the Syrian refugee influx. In some villages the number of refugees is equal to or greater than the Lebanese population.

The events of the day ended with the creation of five sector working groups, which gave attendees an opportunity to discuss cooperation on a regional level. Many of the villages in the surrounding area are facing similar challenges and could benefit from the lessons of the conference.

Contact: Marialice Ariens, Middle East Program Manager  
[mariens@usaid.gov](mailto:mariens@usaid.gov) (202) 712-4031

Follow us! @usaidoti

Visit us! <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/promoting-peaceful-political-transitions>