



Memory of the War

Increasing mutual acceptance of multiple and diverse narratives on the civil war in schools and youth groups

1) Context

The educational system in Lebanon is very much divided along sectarian and/or political and social lines – schools and other institutions often place their emphasis in the teaching of history on events and narratives according to their political and religious affiliations. Efforts by the Lebanese government to compile a unified history book have failed so far. This has left the Lebanese government in gridlock over approving revised history curricula, leaving the 1971 history curriculum still in effect. Critical events like the civil war and the post-war period are rarely addressed in history education.

This bears the danger of teaching unbalanced views of the past and present violence in Lebanon, of reinforcing narratives of victimization, of reproducing stereotypes and of justifying conflict lines and aggression against others.

2) Our approach

Within the programme area Dealing with the Past, forumZFD provides a safe space to discuss the civil war and other violent events and its consequences in an objective manner. By providing training courses to civil society i.e. teachers, the project aims at increasing mutual acceptance of one's own and other people's narratives. The training courses include innovative learning and teaching methods which promote critical thinking and critically reviewing interpretations of past and present violence.

3) What we do

In cooperation with its partners Lebanese Center for Civic Education (LCCE) and A Step Away, forumZFD has developed a handbook on "Memories of the War" to be



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Partner organisations	Al Jana, MEHE, A Step Away, LCCE, Fighters for Peace
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used by teachers and NGO staff to address past and present violence in Lebanon. The handbook aims to teach youths from the age of 14 that there are various interpretations of history in Lebanon and to help them accept the existence of divergent views on the civil war. It collects narratives from different sides of the conflict alongside other material about the civil war such as interviews, newspaper articles, pictures and exercises; it presents the material in 12 thematic chapters. Each chapter is designed to be easily integrated in history lessons at school or to be used as workshop guidelines in NGO work. The handbook is complemented by a 23-minutes video documentary "When we grew up during the war" which portrays the personal experiences of six people from very diverse backgrounds during the war.

4) Our theories of change

If we provide teachers and NGO staff with the necessary skills, resources and new perspectives to look into conflict narratives, this will enable them to train others using innovative teaching methodologies; it will also facilitate open and constructive discussions on issues related to past and present violent events.

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