



## SAMIDOUN Action Plan, Southern Suburbs of Beirut September 8, 2006

### Introduction

**First:** Based on the initial report resulting from the primary survey of the needs in the southern suburbs, it shows these are not confined to the post-war situation, but go beyond that to be a result of the social and economic problems already present before the outbreak of the last war, which led to considerable aggravation of these problems.

**Second:** Considering that action on a large scale in the southern suburbs need an organization at the level of the state, and considering that the state appears to be absent from this district, it is clear that the primary role in dealing with the consequences of war depends on the initiatives of civil society and political forces entrenched in the social fabric of the region. This is what is completely evident from our initial survey of the needs and action potential.

**Third:** It is also clear that the institutions with the significant presence in the region are those of "Hezbollah." Other institutions located in the surroundings are confined in their effectiveness to a narrow locale, hindered by their capacity constraints and the lack of organization and dynamism.

Thus, the proposal is to build a network from existing institutions and bodies already present on the ground with SAMIDOUN, and to build social centers working on various identified issues. The importance of these centers lies in the fact that we aspire for their long-term continuity, which of course presupposes the planning for the establishment of a permanent center for SAMIDOUN in Beirut's southern suburb, able to work as a support web for the various civic bodies and to support the dynamism and continuity of their work.

### Identifying Needs

A team from SAMIDOUN worked on a form for a basic social survey of the needs of the region. The area had been divided into nine sections, based on the municipalities, then on the extent of the destruction:

- Municipality of Haret Hreik: 4 areas:
  - Al-Hara, the main street and its surroundings until the airport road (tari' al-matar)
  - Bir Al-Abd street, the main street, up to "Hadi Nasrallah" highway
  - Sfeir and Hay-al-Abyad

**[www.SAMIDOUN.org](http://www.SAMIDOUN.org)**

**Main office:** Tal'et Joumblatt, Ain El Mreisseh (+961 3 954585)

**South Coordination:** Field (+961 3 670783) - Tyr Hub (+961 3 870240)

**Southern Suburb of Beirut Coordination:** (+961 3 726954)



- Hay Mouawad
- Burj el-Barajneh Municipality
- Ouza'i area
- Mreijeh municipality
- Ghoubeyri municipality, two areas separated by “Hadi Nasrallah” highway
  - Shiyyeh: Asaad Al-Asaad and Abdul Karim Al-Khalil streets, until the old road to Saida (tari' saida al-adeem)
  - Ghoubeyri, the old main street to the west of the highway

According to this survey, we identified two types of needs, depending on the areas. The first is concentrated in the areas heavily affected by the bombing: Al-Hara, Bir-Al-Abd, Sfeir and Hay Mouawad, and Ouza'i. The second is in the relatively remote areas: Shaye'h, Ghubairi, Mreijeh, Burj el-Barajneh, and Hay El-Sellom.

#### **Type I:**

- Medical needs: spread of some skin and respiratory diseases, and cases of diarrhea and fever
- Environmental intervention: due to compilation of wastes, rubble, dust and water accumulated in the holes left by the bombing
- Limited food needs due to the loss of many of the families of their homes and work
- General sanitation needs due to the displacement of families whose homes have been destroyed to the homes of near-by relatives and friends
- Psycho-social needs for traumatized children, and anxiety among the adults and youth
- Needs to rebuild civilian life in general due to the destruction of public spaces and the lack of cultural venues in the region
- Needs to work on the issue of unemployment due to the loss of many of their work
- Accommodation needs and needs of removal of the rubble, taken care of, for now, by Hezbollah organizations
- The survey also gathered information on a number of civil society organizations in the region with which we can cooperate on the project:
  - Amel Association – Baajour: low-cost health clinic, the first floor area with good administrative area, well known in the region, but the use of its services seem narrow in scope
  - A'ynata club: the charity clinic for the Assembly of Doctors in Lebanon, Hay-Al-Abyad: large space with the ability to house many activities, not very well known in the surrounding area
  - Haret Hreik municipality general library: a large venue, supplemented with a large lecture hall, well-equipped, widely known.

**[www.SAMIDOUN.org](http://www.SAMIDOUN.org)**

**Main office:** Tal'et Joumblatt, Ain El Mreisseh (+961 3 954585)

**South Coordination:** Field (+961 3 670783) - Tyr Hub (+961 3 870240)

**Southern Suburb of Beirut Coordination:** (+961 3 726954)



### **Type II:**

- Food needs due to poverty; these are mainly pre-war needs
- Environmental needs due to the lack of dumps, as well as the heavy population and the condition of buildings
- Psycho-social needs, the result of the impact of displacement and return, and the poverty and general frustration prevailing in the area
- Cultural needs due to the almost entire absence of cultural centers from the region
- Needs to work on the issue of unemployment in terms of the lack of work, the loss of some of their jobs, or their being expelled from their jobs
- The survey also compiled information on a number of civil society organizations willing to cooperate:
  - “Nadi Al-Dah’iya Al-Thakafi”: a cultural club that does not have a center, but can secure a hall in Burj el-Barajneh for literary seminars
  - “Jami’yat al-Midan,” Shiyyah: development NGO agency, scarcely known, did not provide a lot of services in the past, stationed at a home at ground level , could lose its status if forced to sell the house
  - Mreijeh municipality is to secure places for potential activities
  - Amel Association – Hay El-Sellom: low-cost health clinic, known on a narrow scale
  - Amel Association – Ghoubeiri: clinic and social center, well known in the area, with a large administrative space

### **Coordination with Hezbollah's Organizations**

Coordination with Hezbollah in Beirut's southern suburb started on the basis of a visit by SAMIDOUN to the Islamic Health Association (al-hay'a al sohiya al-islamiya). It was clear that Hezbollah is mainly concerned with providing shelter and reconstruction at the current time. Several aspects of the party's strategy in surveying the damages and compensating (through "Jihad Al-Bina'a") were also discussed. The institution has also expressed its receptiveness to cooperating with SAMIDOUN on the several issues which the network intends on undertaking.

### **Coordination with Municipalities**

SAMIDOUN contacted and visited the municipalities of the southern suburbs. The most receptive municipalities were Haret Hreik, Ghoubeiri (on social issues) and Al-Mreijeh. Shwayfet municipality, on the other hand, demonstrated an inclination to evade their responsibilities, as the meeting with SAMIDOUN was cancelled twice.

**[www.SAMIDOUN.org](http://www.SAMIDOUN.org)**

**Main office:** Tal'et Joumblatt, Ain El Mreisseh (+961 3 954585)

**South Coordination:** Field (+961 3 670783) - Tyr Hub (+961 3 870240)

**Southern Suburb of Beirut Coordination:** (+961 3 726954)



## **Coordination with International Bodies**

UNHCR showed interest in the activities undertaken by the network, particularly in the cultural and psycho-social programs. The UNHCR has offered to secure a place in the area of Ayn El-Roummaneh, as a center for activities for SAMIDOUN in the suburb, especially for the psycho-social team. In addition, they expressed their readiness to provide logistical support for SAMIDOUN's teams.

## **The Draft Proposal "SAMIDOUN-Suburb"**

Based on the abovementioned, we can see that there is a vast potential for action within the southern suburb depending on the existing needs, and in cooperation with the various local bodies operating there. At this point we can formulate a plan for action in two complementary fields, the first addressing the foreseeable future in terms of relief work continuing for the next two months, the second dealing with long-term needs and projects, open to development with time.

### **Emergency Project**

The project entails the establishment of a network of relations with the local associations and clubs, as a beginning to the establishment of a safety net to work within the local community. This network would initially rely on its work and its securing of several needs through SAMIDOUN, aiming to build bridges of trust between itself and a considerable portion of the local community. These needs can be divided under several sections:

1. Psycho-social Intervention Project: this project relies on joint activities, to support the local community in the emergency period, particularly children, women and families. The project intervenes at the social level and tries to devise ways to overcome adversity through the empowerment of self-expression and access to knowledge. The project draws on a base of volunteers, supported by a number of experts in the social and psychological fields.
2. Environmental Intervention Project: this project relies primarily on educational seminars concerning environmental risks and studies of the environmental situation in the suburb, as well as attempts to monitor the reconstruction to be based on environmentally balanced policies. At another level, the project aims to build environmental awareness for the local community in terms of empowerment with environmental skills.

**[www.SAMIDOUN.org](http://www.SAMIDOUN.org)**

**Main office:** Tal'et Joumblatt, Ain El Mreisseh (+961 3 954585)

**South Coordination:** Field (+961 3 670783) - Tyr Hub (+961 3 870240)

**Southern Suburb of Beirut Coordination:** (+961 3 726954)



3. Food Security Project: this project relies on the study of SAMIDOUN's capability of securing food aid and surveying the families in need of emergency aid, especially those who lost their homes or jobs, in coordination with the social bodies of Hezbollah.
4. Cultural Project: this project relies on the establishment of a cultural dynamic within the region through a number of centers through which SAMIDOUN can operate, in partnership with a number of activists from the region or from outside to form a nucleus for a cultural club. We may also benefit from the presence of the "Suburb Cultural Club" (Nadi Ad-Da'hiya Al-Thakafi) and attempt to activate it.
5. Youth Project: this project aims to show the value of volunteerism in the support of the community and to induce the youth to volunteer work in the service of society. In addition, the project aims to conduct workshops to enable the youth with various social skills.
6. Unemployment Action Project: the project relies on the collection of information on unemployment, and individuals suffering from it, and then working to mobilize their efforts in a campaign tackling the issue. This campaign would be based on three lines of work: the first is the compilation of information on job skills they have and their level of need (or work), then connecting this information with the needs of working force at large enterprises or reconstruction projects. Secondly, mobilizing efforts to pressure the government to work on the issue of unemployment and the payment of unemployment benefits. Thirdly, working on enabling workers with new job skills which can create new horizons for them.

### **Long-term Project**

This project depends on the achievements of the emergency project, utilizing them to build a "community center" in the southern suburb. This center/project can be defined as a center of social solidarity between families. It relies on networking with a group of families (mostly in need) in the nearby area, or choosing a whole neighborhood as a center for action. The group of families might be planned to involve around 1000 medium and low income families. Through this group we can measure the results for further plans. The points can be addressed by the project are no different than those of the emergency project, drawing from them to build a more balanced, more expansive and integrated action plans:

1. Food and Material Security: achieving a mechanism for lowering the prices of food, non-food items, and other necessities, through the establishment of associations or cooperatives of families responsible for purchasing materials in large quantities and then delivering them to the families at whole-sale

**[www.SAMIDOUN.org](http://www.SAMIDOUN.org)**

**Main office:** Tal'et Joumblatt, Ain El Mreisseh (+961 3 954585)

**South Coordination:** Field (+961 3 670783) - Tyr Hub (+961 3 870240)

**Southern Suburb of Beirut Coordination:** (+961 3 726954)



price, with the addition of minor charges for operational costs of the community center.

2. Psycho-social Security: working with families, women and children to create spaces of freedom and possibilities of connection, communication and self-expression, as well as treating certain social problems (through group sessions).
3. Environmental Security: working with families to ensure housing more committed to environmental requirements, through projects for the utilization of solar energy as a means of lowering expenditure and consumption of energy, as well as many other environmental projects.
4. Cultural Spaces: working on the creation of active cultural clubs within the region, through the center and through contacts with the local community, as the creation of a series of festivals and working on the establishment of a number of periodic seminars.
5. Health Security: working with a number of already existing clinics in the district to secure treatment at nominal cost for member families in the center, these clinics themselves becoming attached with the center, with every worker in these clinics including their families at will in the center. We would also work to ensure chronic medicines at low prices through demanding it from its sources directly, or finding other ways.
6. Youth: the establishment of a youth volunteer program, involving itself in development projects, and working within the available capabilities.
7. Employment Project: organizing unemployed workers in the region into unemployment unions to sponsor the interests of workers, work to develop the skills of their personnel, and struggle for their rights.
8. General Assembly: the creation of a general assembly of families to monitor role of the center and account for its work, given the authority to approve and amend the projects of the center and their progress. The general assembly is built on the basis of the sub-committees (divided according to jurisdiction) within the center.

## **Initial Steps**

- The project started with the psycho-social intervention group beginning to work in Haret Hreik – Ba'jur Street, after coordination with Amel Association, focusing mainly on working with children in the area.

**[www.SAMIDOUN.org](http://www.SAMIDOUN.org)**

**Main office:** Tal'et Joumblatt, Ain El Mreisseh (+961 3 954585)

**South Coordination:** Field (+961 3 670783) - Tyr Hub (+961 3 870240)

**Southern Suburb of Beirut Coordination:** (+961 3 726954)



- Preparations are under way for a number of cultural gatherings, starting with a number of poetry symposiums engaging many young poets at A'ynata's Society (jami'yat a'ynata) center, then with a number of films in coordination with Beirut DC (Development and Cinema collective) and the municipality of Haret Hreik.
- Preparations will take place for a poetry festival, going hand in hand with the preparation of a poetry booklet issued by SAMIDOUN, including a number of texts that were produced during the war.

**[www.SAMIDOUN.org](http://www.SAMIDOUN.org)**

**Main office:** Tal'et Joumblatt, Ain El Mreisseh (+961 3 954585)

**South Coordination:** Field (+961 3 670783) - Tyr Hub (+961 3 870240)

**Southern Suburb of Beirut Coordination:** (+961 3 726954)