

In cooperation with

Power of Remembrance

Facilitating dialogue among/within political parties towards a mutual understanding of different perspectives on the past

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 that are in line with 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 victimisation, of reproducing stereotypes and of justifying conflict lines and aggression against others.

2) Our approach

In the programme area Dealing with the Past (DwP), forumZFD initiated the “Power of Remembrance” project to start a process of reflection among political parties’ about the utilisation of memory of past violent conflicts and to increase mutual respect for different narratives of the past.

3) What we do

In collaboration with forumZFD, Dr. Mara Albrecht (University of Erfurt, Germany) and Dr. Bassel Akar (CARE, NDU) carried out a study entitled “The Power of Remembrance: Political parties, memory and learning about the past in Lebanon”. The study serves as an entry point to work with persons “hard to reach” (e.g. political party representatives); the aim is to facilitate dialogues



© Copyright Notre Dame University-Louaize. All rights reserved

Programme area	Dealing with the Past (DwP)
Partner organisations	CARE, NDU, LAH
Duration	07/2015 - 06/ 2017
Budget	55,000 \$ (2016)
Contact person	Nina Strumpf

among/within them towards a mutual understanding of different perspectives on the past. Interviewing politicians of seven political parties (e.g. Progressive Socialist Party, Lebanese Kataeb Party, Lebanese Forces) the researchers looked into how the political parties use the memory of the war and investigated their influence in the field of formal and non-formal education. The main findings of the report were presented to the public in different events.

As a first step towards a process of reflecting political parties’ roles in remembering and learning about past and present violence, forumZFD in collaboration with LAH organised a seminar with the youth organisations of five political parties at the University Saint Joseph (USJ).

4) Our theories of change

If we create space for dialogue, discussion and training to various stakeholders on DwP, this will lead to constructive, reflective exchange on different narratives of past and present violence, roles and responsibilities and approaches on DwP. This, in turn, will trigger the development and implementation of new projects using innovative approaches, which will contribute to an increased mutual acceptance of different narratives.

CONTACT US

-  facebook.com/forumZFDLebanon
-  lebanon.forumzfd.org
-  lebanon@forumZFD.de
-  +961 1 422 351