

Social protection & employment

Improving the economic and social conditions of low-income groups in Lebanon

EC Partner

Government of Lebanon

Facts and Figures

- **EC contribution**
€25 million (80% of total) granted 1999-2003
- **Loan procedures** provide financial and non-financial support to micro, small and medium enterprises for **sustainable economic activities** with significant **impact on poverty alleviation**

Did you know?

By 2010, there will be free trading between the EU & the Mediterranean countries*



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

"It was very fast and helpful to take the loan with the help of ESFD, subject to affordable conditions. I wouldn't have been able to take on this daycare centre if I hadn't been given this loan that was difficult to obtain through the regular commercial banks' lending schemes"

A woman running a daycare centre in the South of Lebanon



Community development training in Lebanon

Context A country with a difficult past

The Economic and Social Fund of Development project addresses the economic and social problems in Lebanon engendered by 15 years of civil conflict, 22 years of Israeli occupation and ongoing regional tensions. In partnership with the EC, this programme aims at cushioning the impact of trade liberalization and at helping the Lebanese government to improve the economic and social conditions of low-income groups in Lebanon.

Objective Community development and job creation

- To establish an Economic and Social Fund of Development (ESFD) which functions as an autonomous entity and supports the Lebanese government in defining and enforcing its social development strategy and policies
- To improve living conditions of the most disadvantaged groups residing in the poorest areas
- To increase the income and number of jobs in disadvantaged regions through the mobilisation of credit funds

Impact What has been achieved?

- **1,135 loans** provided to small and micro enterprises
- **924 sustainable jobs** created through the loans
- Repayment rate of **99%** from end-borrowers to lender
- **6** community development and social service projects implemented following demand from target groups
- **Local ownership developed** through systematic community mobilisation, participatory planning, project preparation and implementation through local committees and working groups

* Barcelona Declaration, 1995

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Creating more opportunities for women

Research has shown that women tend to be concentrated in the lower-status and lower-paid jobs and they are also more likely to be out of work. That's why the gender dimension is so important in job creation activities and community development. This dimension has been seriously taken into account in this programme to counter gender inequality in the labour market.

A target of **20%** of female end-borrowers of the credit schemes has been set up. In order to meet this target, meetings with women's groups and associations in different villages in north and south Lebanon have been organised.

One of the beneficiaries testified how the loan that was granted to her opened up new possibilities *"I had to work to help my husband support our family and the easy access to credit supported by the ESFD allowed me to start my own hairdresser shop."*



Woman participating in Project Cycle Management training in Lebanon