



**Ministry of Social Affairs**

**United Nations Population Fund**



## **ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT 2005**

Population and Development Strategies Sub-programme

## ACRONYMS

AIDS.....	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
APR.....	Annual Project Report
CAS.....	Central Administration of Statistics
CDR.....	Council for Development and Reconstruction
CST.....	Country Support Team
FHS.....	Faculty of Health Sciences
ICPD.....	International Conference on Population and Development
IEC.....	Information, Education and Communication
GBV.....	Gender-Based Violence
GEEW.....	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
LECORVAW.....	Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women
LFPA.....	Lebanon Family Planning Association
MADMA.....	Center for Development Studies and Projects
MDGs.....	Millennium Development Goals
MoEd.....	Ministry of Education
MoPH.....	Ministry of Public Health
MoSA.....	Ministry of Social Affairs
MPS.....	Multipurpose Survey
NCERD.....	National Center for Educational Research and Development
NCLW.....	National Commission of Lebanese Women
NGOs.....	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPPC.....	National Permanent Population Committee
PAPFAM.....	Pan Arab Project for Family Health
PDS.....	Population and Development Strategies
PoA.....	Plan of Action
RA.....	Research Assistant
RAR.....	Rapid Appraisal Research
RBM.....	Results-Based Management
RH.....	Reproductive Health
TORs.....	Terms of Reference
TS.....	Technical Secretariat
UN.....	United Nations
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA.....	United Nations Population Fund
UNFPA AR.....	United Nations Population Fund Assistant Representative
UNFPA CO.....	United Nations Population Fund Country Office
UOB.....	University of Balamand
WPD.....	World Population Day

## ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT 2005

### Population and Development Strategies Sub-programme

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## **ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT 2005**

### **Population and Development Strategies Sub-programme**

#### **Narrative Programme Performance**

##### **1. Context:**

Significant changes in Lebanon's political arena during the past year, including above all, the several failed attempts to form an agreed upon government and the rivalries among different political factions, brought along a kind of a stall to governmental activities, and slowed down administrative functions which impeded the work of most governmental institutions and projects. This has caused significant delays in donor support due to delays in government formation.

Despite these changes Lebanon was still able to move forward towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the ICPD Program of Action. In fact, the PAPFAM survey, published in 2005, showed that around 97% of the surveyed population were aware that sexual relations are one cause of AIDS transmission, and 91.2% knew that safe sexual relations are the main form of prevention against AIDS.

The same survey showed that 94% of Lebanese women are followed up by a doctor during pregnancy; 86% have taken iron supplements during pregnancy and 83% have taken vitamin supplements. Furthermore, the percentage of deliveries in unsafe settings has decreased over the past decade to 2.4% versus around 97% of deliveries that were attended by skilled personnel.

The current Lebanese government has made a very progressive commitment through its ministerial declaration on July 28-30, 2005, to address gender and youth issues. Within this context, and for the first time in its political history, the Lebanese government has vowed to focus on gender issues and on the role of women as major and active partners in public life, through the establishment of a favorable legal environment to promote women's role in different sectors pertaining to development. In addition, the government has committed to promote the integration of the concept of gender participation in all financial, economic, and social policies. It is also worth noting that the Ministry of Social Affairs launched the process of development of a social development strategy at the national level that should be finalized and endorsed during the year 2006. The youth were also placed in the government's list of priorities; it has for that matter vowed to encourage the participation of youth in national policies, to tackle all issues pertaining to education, culture, and the economy and more specifically, it called for encouraging youth industrial, economic and trade entrepreneurs through appropriate legislations and facilitation of credits for such projects.

On the other hand, and according to an article of the Daily Star dated June 24, 2005, the percentage of people living below the poverty line set at 2.2\$ per day is still at 28%, which

indicates that although showing some progress towards the MDGs, the government needs to address the issue of poverty in Lebanon and involve all actors in the society in the process. Moreover, recent statistics show that Lebanon has still a long way to achieve Gender Equity, Equality and Empowerment. The multi-purpose survey showed continued discrimination in employment trends between men and women, where the proportion of women among those employed was 20.5% versus 79.5% for men. This indicates a remaining need for a revision of national policies regarding girls' education, discriminatory social practices, equal opportunities for employment, in addition to a revision of all legal texts pertaining to the status of women and their protection against all forms of discrimination. In addition, there is a need for reassessing the labor and education policies, especially that 62.5% of the labor force in Lebanon is composed of individuals at the intermediate level of education or below, and 37.2% are at the secondary school level and above; with 17.2% of the latter are at the university level.

Within the context of the above mentioned achievements and gaps, and through its activities, the PDS will continue to contribute - as part of the UNFPA country programme - to the national efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the ICPD Program of Action especially in the fields of population, RH, and GEEW.

## 2. Project Performance Analysis:

In line with the outputs stated in the PDS project document and the 2005 workplan (Annex 1), the following activities were achieved:

### **Output 1: “Strengthened national capacities for the integration of population, RH and gender dimensions into sectoral planning and programming”.**

#### *1.1. Develop national population policy plans of action (PoAs).*

The PDS has adopted a more comprehensive approach for the integration of population issues in sectoral plans since the end of 2004. This approach included a review of similar countries’ experiences in integration, mapping out structural units and departments of ministries, and mapping out available sectoral strategies. This would lead to the selection of the sector (s) in which the integration will take place as a pilot phase.

Accordingly, the PDS team completed in November 2005 a report summarizing similar countries’ experiences in integration of population issues in sectoral plans and programmes. Information for this report was gathered from available pertinent reports and documents as well as data collected through questionnaires addressed to 6 UNFPA COs in the region (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Yemen). The report mainly focuses on the processes of integration of population issues in different sectors, the monitoring and coordination mechanisms established, the bodies involved, the outcomes and the main constraints. To complement this report, and to allow a better insight on one country's experience, CST advisor, Dr. Abdel Aziz Farah suggested that two PDS staff members undertake a study tour to Yemen given the progress Yemen has made so far in integrating population issues in sectoral plans and programmes at all levels.

At another level, the PDS team conducted face to face interviews with officials in a number of selected ministries/institutions in order to validate and elaborate the information contained in the draft report on mapping structural units at the ministries in Lebanon. This exercise should have been completed during the first quarter of the year, however, political circumstances made it very difficult to set appointments with officials at different ministries. For this reason, out of 23 ministries, officials at only 7 of the most relevant ministries were interviewed (National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Culture Ministry of Youth and Sports.

In parallel, the PDS team undertook an assessment of available sectoral strategies to appraise gaps and opportunities for the integration of population dimensions in sectoral planning and programming. Based on a unified template the PDS team reviewed available relevant strategies (AIDS/HIV National Strategic Plan, Women’s National Strategy, IEC/Advocacy strategy in support of population and RH, and the plan for educational reform). The report will be reviewed and tailored based on sector chosen for integration in such a way to highlight the gaps and opportunities in all available strategies that would match the integration needs in the chosen sector.

The combination of these two assessments, will allow a more objective selection of the sector(s) for pilot integration of population dimensions. This selection would therefore be based on strategic gaps and opportunities as well as on available infrastructure and resources.

Thorough discussions amongst the PDS team as well as with UNFPA Assistant Representative and CST advisor for PDS helped clarify the road map for the integration process. As such, it consisted of the following phases:

1. Orientation workshop for PDS staff and few other participants from other line ministries and universities on Integration as a concept and on the SPECTRUM software for population projections and needs assessment for integration of population dimensions in sectoral plans. This phase was completed in November 2005 and a full report of the workshop facilitated by CST advisor Dr. Abdel Aziz Farah was finalized including important recommendations for the following phases. The workshop tackled the definition, rationale and evolution of integration concept, requirements of a sound integration process, tools and techniques of estimations and projections of needs for integration (application of integrated system of models for projecting needs and requirements for achieving national and sub-national planned population, RH and gender goals; methods for estimating and scaling up of investments, policies and strategies in support of the goals (through the use of Spectrum), programming for integration processes (multistage matrix).
2. Selection of sectors for pilot integration: The PDS team concluded based on the previously mentioned mapping reports that both the Health and Education sectors have a comparative advantage given the already ongoing initiatives for integration of some population dimensions in related activities and interventions.
3. Selection of focal points from line ministries (mainly health and education), NGOs, academia and the private sector. The terms of reference for such focal points will include tasks pertaining to advocacy for integration, contribution to the development of plans of action for integration, participation in the development of monitoring and evaluation framework for integration.
4. Selection of 3 to 4 experts in population, demography, health, education and development planning to contribute to the development of integration PoAs for selected sectors.
5. Training workshop involving focal points and experts on integration concept, process and methodology as well as the use of available data and indicators to project needs for integration.
6. Establishment of 2 multidisciplinary task forces (MTFs) including focal points and experts to develop PoAs for each sector along with a plan/framework for monitoring and evaluation.
7. Ratification and enunciation of PoAs
8. Launching the implementation based on the ratified PoAs and as per joint agreements to be developed with concerned organizations in each sector.

*1.2. Advance institutional and technical capacities of the NPPC, TS and Focal Units in line-ministries and NGOs.*

In order to assess gaps pertaining to the structure and functions of the NPPC and with the aim of proposing practical recommendations to strengthen it and render it fully operational, the PDS recruited a research firm (Dar Al Tanmiya) to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Lebanese NPPC and its TS (structure, activities/functions, status, effectiveness, work methodology and processes, coordination mechanisms, representation, support bodies,...) along with a comparative study of Lebanon NPPC/TS with other NPPC/TS in selected countries of the Arab region. In this regard, detailed TORs for the study were developed in consultation with UNFPA CO, a call for proposals was announced on UNFPA and MOSA websites as well as through official letters sent to a number of research firms and experts in the field of population/development/evaluation. A selection committee was formed - including representatives from the PDS project, UNFPA, the MOSA - to evaluate submitted proposals based on a set of agreed upon criteria. Accordingly, Dar Al Tanmiya was selected to carry out the study starting December 2005 and expected to be completed by end of February 2006. The PDS team and UNFPA CO provided the firm with all available documents and contacts related to the NPPC.

The PDS reactivated the recruitment process for the vacant Research Assistant position in February 2005 given the increased need for a third technical staff to share the workload and contribute to the project's activities. Three short-listed candidates were interviewed and Ms. Nisrine Tawily was appointed to join the PDS team in July 2005.

On the other hand, Ms. Mireille Rahme who was in charge of the financial management of the Project in addition to her regular tasks as Research Assistant, resigned in September 2005 from her financial responsibilities as they were overwhelming her in such a way that made it difficult for her to perform her other substantive tasks. Therefore, and as the need aroused for further administrative support to the Project, a call for candidacies was launched by the PDS to recruit a full time Administrative and Finance Assistant. Potential candidates were interviewed in November 2005, Ms. Sandra Mouawad was selected and is supposed to begin working officially in February 2006. Both recruitments took place according to applied rules and regulations and based on recommendation of selection committees formed for that purpose.

In addition to the recruitment of new staff, there was a need to build capacities of the PDS team as per the recommendations emerging from the PDS 2004 end of year retreat. Within this context, and to serve other projects' needs as well, UNFPA CO was preparing to hold a training workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation. This workshop was repeatedly postponed due to various circumstances related to the political situation in the country and the conflict of schedule between various participating projects staff. On many occasions, PDS staff were interested and willing to apply for online courses offered by different UN agencies including UNFPA and covering a range of issues in relation to population and development. Now, with a new high speed connection installed at the PDS office, such courses will be more accessible during 2006.

Additionally, Ms. Mireille Rahme was selected to participate to a practical training course for acquiring basic technical knowledge on models of integration, particularly on Spectrum (A Set of Computer Programs for Population, FP, HIV/AIDS, RH Analyses and Projections). The 7 days study tour took place in Amman at the offices of the UNFPA-CST and Jordanian NPPC. Following this training, Ms. Rahme was able to substantively participate to the preparation of the first integration workshop on integration. She also will be training her colleagues in the use of SPECTRUM for the generation of projections.

In follow up to Gender mainstreaming in planning, the PDS team proceeded early in 2005 to the assessment of the proposed plan of action emerging from the Chtaura workshop on “Gender capacity building assessment”, and suggested few clarifications and details to some activities mentioned in the workplan. In a following step, the PDS convened in September 2005 a technical meeting of all participants to the 2003 Workshop; they were reminded of the initial plan of action and asked to review it and update it in order to make it more functional and likely to be implemented. It was agreed that different committees will be established to follow-up the execution of each section of the plan of action; the PDS will be responsible of coordinating the committees. Further to this meeting, the PDS team collected comments and clarifications presented by the participants and redrafted the plan of action accordingly. The initial and modified plans were both presented on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 by the PDS coordinator during the Workshop on Stakeholders Analysis for the Integration of Gender-Based-Violence in the National Reproductive Health Programme organized by the MoPH, MoSA and UNFPA.

**Output 2: “Increased availability of sex-disaggregated population related data by region”.**

*2.1. Establish a national Population related Databank:*

Several reports, studies and discussions during a number of technical meetings, show that there is an increasing need for a unified population databank whereby all recent reports and studies are made available to all concerned parties and individuals. For this reason, the PDS prepared in 2005 for a Needs assessment study of available population/demographic integrated information systems/databanks. During the process of announcement and short listing of potential candidates for the study, it was brought to the attention of PDS team that a similar study was commissioned to the consultancy firm MADMA by UNICEF. This is why the PDS decided to postpone recruitment of consultant until further information is available from the study by UNICEF and accordingly a complementary study will be launched to avoid duplication of efforts.

*2.3. Undertake in-depth and specialized studies in priority areas:*

The PDS team has collaborated with the national commission for the elderly and the department of family affairs at the MOSA to develop a comprehensive proposal on Elderly care in Lebanon. The study consists of: 1) an assessment of Elderly clubs, institutions, associations and clinics in Lebanon (including MoSA’s clubs); 2) a review and mapping of laws pertaining to the elderly in Lebanon. The questionnaire addressing NGOs, clubs and clinics is already in its final stages and the field work is expected to be launched in February

2006. Two joint committees were established to closely monitor the stages of data collection, coding and entry, as well as report writing: a technical committee and a coordination committee.

It is worth mentioning that UNFPA CO shared with PDS office a comprehensive report on Elderly services and status in Pakistan. It was agreed that this report will be reviewed by the PDS team and the components of the elderly study will be modified if need be in order for it to include all aspects of this emerging population issue.

#### *2.4. Undertake RH country-programme tailored data collection activities/surveys:*

In 2005, two RH-related studies were carried out:

- A Rapid Appraisal Research (RAR) on the knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviors of adult men and women, adolescents/youth men and women, service providers, and community leaders on RH matters. This study was carried out by the Reproductive Health research group at AUB Faculty of Health Sciences. The first draft report of the study was shared with PDS technical advisor for review and comments.
- Baseline Study on Counseling in Reproductive Health carried out by Dr. Brigitte Khoury (clinical psychologist). By the end of 2005, PDS had already received three consecutive drafts of the study report.

On another level and as has been the case during 2004, PDS technical advisor contributed to the analysis of the data and the report writing. Dr. Houry also wrote two chapters in the analytical report to be published based on data from the multipurpose survey.

Concerning the PAPFAM, in addition to the financial contribution by PDS, the project contributed to the launching of the preliminary findings in a press conference. In addition, the PDS will be using data from the PAPFAM to undertake in-depth studies on various population issues.

**Output 3: “Increased awareness and understanding of priority population, RH and gender issues, contained in the national population policy, among policy makers, parliamentarians and opinion leaders”.**

#### *3.1. Hold advocacy strategy workshop to develop audience, message, and media channel strategy:*

During the year 2005, PDS worked on preparing the grounds for the development of a national advocacy strategy on population issues. This entailed the following steps:

- Drafting a justification/rationale on the need to develop an advocacy strategy on population issues in Lebanon.
- Preparation of a CST mission request for a training on advocacy involving all partners in addition to PDS staff members (cancelled for security reasons).
- Selection of key individuals/stakeholders who should be invited to participate in the workshop and later to be involved in the entire process of development of the advocacy strategy.

- Conduction of preliminary search on similar advocacy strategies/experiences in the region.
- Drafting TORs for a consultant to work on developing an advocacy strategy

After the cancellation of CST mission, the PDS team decided not to break the process and still hold a small scale technical meeting on advocacy with various partners. The meeting took place on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Hamra. The following issues were presented and discussed:

- o What are the Population issues in Lebanon?
- o What are the differences between advocacy and communication?
- o Why an advocacy strategy for population issues is needed in Lebanon?
- o What are the expected outcomes of the advocacy strategy (priorities and objectives)?

As mentioned in the final report, participants from various concerned institutions/sectors expressed the need for further clarification of the concept of advocacy, the definition and characteristics of a strategy, as well as on the scope, content and outcome of the advocacy strategy. A training workshop by CST advisor on advocacy/communication will be organized during 2006 to address these issues. The TORs for the development of the advocacy strategy will be finalized early 2006 and a committee will be formed to jointly work with the consultant at all stages of the assignment.

### *3.3. Establish media network in support of population, RH, and gender issues:*

In an effort to improve coordination and collaboration for all activities pertaining to media and advocacy, a media and advocacy committee was established within MoSA comprising representatives from the RH-IEC, PDS and the IEC Unit. This committee was meant to jointly plan and monitor the implementation of activities including the establishment and capacity building of the media network in support of population issues. However, it only convened once early 2005, and its activities were suspended for the foreseeable future as the political events were grasping all the attention of the media professionals in Lebanon.

### *3.4. Enhance the awareness and understanding of media network members in priority population, RH and gender issues:*

During the revision of the 2005 workplan with UNFPA CO, it was agreed that a study on media knowledge and perceptions vis-à-vis population issues is needed to help the PDS team define priorities and needs for the advocacy strategy as well as appropriate awareness raising tools to be used when addressing the media. Accordingly, TORs were prepared and an announcement was posted on UNFPA and MOSA websites. As is the case with all consultancies, a selection committee was formed and a team of two consultants, Ms. Nibal Zgheib and Ms. Lara Ajjawi, was recruited to undertake the study. The consultants developed a time bound action plan based on the agreed upon TORs. The questionnaire for the study was finalized based on comments from PDS and UNFOA CO. It includes, in addition to general questions, sections covering a variety of themes among which RH, GEEW, Migration, Environment, the Elderly, Youth concerns, and people with special needs. The

data collection process is expected to be completed by the end of January 2006. The draft analytical report will be submitted end of February 2006.

*3.5. Launch advocacy activities to advance policy dialogue among parliamentarians, decision-makers, and other influentials at national and community levels on population, RH and gender issues:*

The PDS marked the World Population Day (WPD) 2005 which theme focused on women empowerment with the slogan “Equality empowers”, with two main advocacy activities:

- July 11, 2005 (Movempick Hotel, Raouche): In collaboration with the Lebanese Family Planning Association (LFPA) and the UNFPA, the PDS participated in the organization of a technical meeting/debate on Lebanon’s ICPD +10 national report with specific focus on the status, progress, and challenges related to women equity and empowerment in Lebanon, particularly in the economic, political, social, and legislative fields. Speakers included Dr. Hala Naufal who presented the ICPD+10 national report, and Dr. Fadia Hteit who described the status of Lebanon with regard to GEEW. Both presentations were followed by a thorough discussion with the participants in the meeting, mainly civil servants, NGO representatives, academicians and media professionals.
- July 13, 2005 (Crowne Plaza Hotel, Hamra): In collaboration with the Volunteers Department at the MoSA, the PDS organized a youth debate involving 45 university students from the regions of Nabatieh, Tripoli, Bekaa and Beirut. The debate was moderated by Ms. Rabiha El Zayyat, journalist and TV program presenter, with the participation of Me. Marie-Rose Zalzal, legal expert on gender issues, and Dr. Abbas Mekki, psycho-sociologist. The debate aimed at highlighting the perceptions and attitudes of young people regarding gender equity and women’s empowerment. A full narrative and analytical report was prepared by the PDS team based on an evaluation meeting including a set of useful recommendations that would help in planning similar events in the future.

*3.5.3. Develop and disseminate user-friendly brochures/kits/policy briefs on the national population policy and its POA:*

During the year 2005, PDS finalized and printed an advocacy kit on priority population issues aiming at increasing the visibility of national achievements and assistance on population matters during the last decade. The Kit entitled

"القضايا السكانية في لبنان: جهود مستمرة..." consists of fact sheets on seven selected priority population issues, and includes a guidebook on national population-related committees/institutions in Lebanon.

In parallel, the PDS team proceeded to the preparation of a draft plan of action for the dissemination of the Advocacy Kit through a variety of traditional and innovative advocacy activities. The plan comprises the various intended audience categories, the core advocacy message(s) to be addressed, and the proposed type of activities. Along with other reports and

communication material, this kit will constitute a very important advocacy tool that would be reflected in the national advocacy strategy.

The PDS made several attempts to launch the Kit through a press conference during the second half of 2005, however the critical political circumstances and the insecurity in the country stood in the way. As a result, the kit will be distributed to relevant beneficiaries and disseminated during PDS activities of 2006.

### 3. Partnerships in Development

Linking population dimensions to other social aspects is very important to insure a more holistic approach to sustainable population development. Within this context, and in partnership with the Family Affairs Department at the MoSA (مصلحة الشؤون الأسرية) and the National Permanent Committee on Elderly Issues (الهيئة الوطنية الدائمة لرعاية شؤون المسنين), the PDS launched towards the end of 2005 a study on Elderly Care in Lebanon. Several meetings were scheduled to jointly develop the project proposal, and tasks have been distributed among members of all partners. In addition, and to strengthen coordination and monitoring at all phases a technical and coordinating committee were established with representation from PDS, National committee for the elderly, and department of family affairs, to monitor the implementation of the project's phases.

On another note, one of the PDS major outputs as per the project document is related to advocacy for population, RH, and gender equity, equality and empowerment. This output will mainly be achieved through the development of a national advocacy strategy. Such endeavor requires collaboration, cooperation and the participation of different parties concerned with population, IEC and advocacy issues. For that matter, the PDS took the initiative of strengthening collaboration among different concerned stakeholders through the organization of an advocacy technical meeting on November 1, 2005, to discuss basic concepts and needs pertaining to advocacy. Representatives from National Center for Educational Research and Development, the National News Agency, the Lebanese University, the Social Training Center, Amel Association, MoSA, IEC unit at the MoSA, UNFPA, CRD, LFPA, and members of Civil Society attended this meeting. One common comment by all attendees was that an in-depth training on advocacy strategy is required for all to unify the vision and terminology. The PDS is committed to strengthen and expand partnership with the above mentioned and new partners and to hold a training workshop to answer to the needs raised by participants.

Gender is a crosscutting issue affected by political, social, and economic changes. In the PDS project document, there is emphasis on PDS role in supporting national capacity building on Gender Mainstreaming in planning, as well as its role in raising awareness on gender related issues among different segments of the population. This role has been reflected during the past year in the different partnerships the PDS has established with Lebanese and International bodies. As a matter of fact and in an effort to strengthen the partnership established, since 2003, with the Council for Development and Reconstruction, the National Commission of Lebanese Women, as well as with other UN supported programmes and projects, the PDS organized a follow-up meeting in 2005 to discuss and elaborate the plan of action for the mainstreaming of gender in development planning. Additionally, the World Population Day, which main theme was "Equality Empowers", was marked jointly by the PDS and the Lebanese Family Planning Association and with the support of the UNFPA, through a one-day workshop tackling gender issues in Lebanon. During the same week, the PDS organized a panel discussion on gender equality in partnership with the Volunteers Department at the MoSA, gathering young men and women from different regions of the country, and having different social and religious backgrounds

#### **4. Managing for results:**

The overall instability in Lebanon, caused by the many unfortunate circumstances throughout the year 2005, greatly affected project's performance. As a result, there were significant delays in the execution of a number of activities, mainly those that required collaboration with other partners. In addition, a number of events were postponed several times and eventually cancelled. This has made the fulfillment of the agreed upon objectives and outcomes for 2005 a very difficult task.

In addition to the ones mentioned above, other constraints and main facilitating factors were highlighted during the PDS 2005 end of year retreat that took place towards the end of December 2005. Based on discussions during the retreat, the PDS team has come up with a series of recommendations aiming at improving overall project's performance in such a way to ensure achievement of results according to agreed upon priorities and workplan for the year 2006.

#### **Main constraints and challenges:**

1. General political and security situation in Lebanon:
  - High number of strikes and official mourning days
  - Banning of travel to Lebanon to UNFPA CST advisors during a certain period
  - Parliamentary elections and the transition between different governments
2. Bureaucratic and financial barriers.
3. Decreased regular biweekly meetings during the second part of the year (decreased knowledge sharing among staff members).
4. Adhoc/last minute planning of some activities (Late invitations to participants in technical meetings or workshops, little preparation to event) mainly due to:
  - Political / security situation
5. Overload of senior research assistant with accounting work at the expense of substantive technical project work
6. Low number of applicants to the studies announced on UNFPA and MOSA website which made the recruitment process much longer than expected due to the need to extend the deadline for applications and to use alternative methods for informing professionals about the available consultancies

#### **Main facilitating factors:**

Despite the numerous barriers faced during 2005 both internally and externally, the PDS project was able to achieve important results thanks to a number of facilitating factors that helped PDS staff overcome previously mentioned obstacles. These include:

1. Improved coordination, collaboration and communication with different partners:
  - Joint planning and implementation of research studies and other activities



- Establishment of common committees and taskforces (on media, gender, recruitment committee...)
  - Improved communication with UNFPA CO at all levels (planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of different activities)
2. Improved internal processes within the PDS project:
- Strengthened capacity of staff members:
    - o Recruitment of new research assistant
    - o Improved accounting work (Clear and accurate financial documents, fulfillment of audit action plan)
    - o Involvement of staff members in all activities
  - Clear distribution of tasks and responsibilities among staff members (Development of monthly workplans)
  - Continuous monitoring and evaluation:
    - o Regular revisions and updates of workplans and budget
    - o Documentation of all activities in the form of reports
    - o Holding evaluation meetings with partners involved in certain activities
  - Establishment of a clear referencing system for external correspondence
  - Excellent overall work atmosphere among staff members which facilitated very productive team work
3. Support by UNFPA CO:
- Presence of UNFPA representative in major PDS events
  - Technical support from UNFPA CO, mainly the assistant representative, on all project's activities including publications, TORs for studies, agendas of meetings, workplans, training of staff....
  - Technical support from UNFPA CO on financial management and accounting processes
  - Guidance and support by PDS project coordinator in the planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation of the project's activities
  - Technical backstopping by RH projects coordinator during absence of PDS project coordinator on maternity leave
  - Coordination with UNFPA CST advisors for planning missions in support of PDS project
4. Support by the new Minister's office:
- Patronage of the Minister to a number of PDS events and activities
  - Presence of Minister in major PDS events
  - Accelerating the appointment of new members to the executive committee

### **Technical backstopping for the PDS project in 2005:**

In addition to the substantive and timely contribution of the UNFPA Lebanon CO to all the activities undertaken by the PDS project described in the previous section, the CST provided important technical support to the PDS. Two main areas required input from CST:

- Advocacy:
  - o Desk review of rationale/justification for advocacy strategy
  - o Training on the need and components of advocacy strategy

- Review of TORs for development of advocacy strategy and plan of action
- Integration: Training workshop on integration of population dimensions in planning

The CST support with regard to Advocacy was minimal as the timing of the advocacy strategy workshop conflicted with security measures preventing CST advisors from performing missions in Lebanon. For this reason, the workshop was cancelled and it was very difficult to reschedule given the busy schedule and previous commitments of the concerned CST advisor. As for the mission pertaining to integration, PDS project along with UNFPA CO and CST PDS advisor thoroughly discussed the road map that would define the process adopted for launching integration. After agreeing on a new road map, as mentioned previously one PDS staff member was sent on a mission to Amman during the month of November to obtain training on the SPECTRUM software package and to prepare for the integration orientation workshop to take place in Beirut end of November 2005. The integration orientation workshop moderated mainly by CST PDS advisor familiarized PDS staff with the concept of integration and helped them define the following phases more concretely.

During the end of year 2005 retreat, the PDS team identified different areas where technical assistance is required in 2006. The objectives and nature of technical assistance will be further elaborated with UNFPA CO upon finalization of the 2006 workplan and budget.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the above and after thorough discussions during the 2005 end of year retreat, the PDS staff agreed to take a series of measures that aim at improving performance:

- Spend more time reflecting and brainstorming on the need, purpose and outcome of every activity before engaging in implementation
- Enforce the existing monitoring and follow up mechanism (Quarterly workplans, weekly meetings, reporting mechanism)
- Develop a reasonable timeline taking into consideration the critical political and security situation in Lebanon
- Accelerate the recruitment process for experts/consultants while maintaining transparent selection procedures
- Allow a minimum of one month preparation for any workshop or technical meeting

## 5. Strategic Issues for the Year 2006:

For the year 2006, the PDS team agreed to focus on the following three priorities:

- Developing a national advocacy strategy on population issues
- Establishing a population databank and regularly updating it
- Building capacities for integration of population dimensions in sectoral plans
- Undertaking a comprehensive study on Elderly status and care in Lebanon
- Strengthening partnerships to serve the above listed priorities
- Increasing visibility of PDS (Website, brochure)

The 2006 workplan (Annex 3) shows different activities leading to the achievement of PDS outputs in relation to the agreed upon PDS priorities for 2006.

Accordingly, three CST missions are required to provide technical assistance to the PDS project in a number of activities contributing to each output as follows:

In Integration:

- One joint mission by CST PDS advisor and CST gender and socio-cultural advisor to prepare and facilitate the second integration training workshop involving focal points from the selected sector (s) in addition to recruited experts.
- Desk review by same advisors of draft PoAs

In Advocacy:

- One mission by CST advocacy/communication advisor to facilitate a training workshop on the components of an advocacy strategy
- Desk review by same advisor of draft advocacy strategy and plan of action

In terms of support required from UNFPA CO, PDS has always counted on the technical input of UNFPA AR. For 2006, it entails support at various levels of planning, implementation and evaluation of activities. More specifically such support includes:

- Feedback and comments on various study reports and PDS publications (Media study, elderly services study, brochure, website...)
- Comments on TORs for different consultants (Advocacy strategy, elderly study, databank, integration experts...)
- Contribution to the planning and implementation of advocacy workshop
- Review of project's workplan and budget (Yearly and quarterly)