

Badna Naaref: Lebanon's Online Wartime Diary

<http://ictj.org/news/badna-naaref-lebanon%E2%80%99s-online-wartime-diary>



Last month ICTJ, with Saint Joseph University's Modern Arab World Research Center and UMAM Documentation and Research launched the website "[Badna Naaref](#)" (We Want to Know) in Beirut, Lebanon.

Amidst a youthful ambiance and a live band, students and teachers from different schools who took part in this oral history project met again to witness their efforts manifested.

"[Badna Naaref](#)" is part of a pilot project entitled "Talking between Generations: A Wartime Diary" that started in February 2011 in consultation with the Ministry of Education in Lebanon.

The website presents more than [100 summaries](#) of recorded interviews with people who were youth during the war in Lebanon from 1975 to 1990, conducted by student participants from twelve Beirut public and private schools. The testimonies focus on people's daily life during the war, their survival, and their suffering.

The website also offers an overview of the training sessions conducted with the students and instructors involved, and a general profile of the participants, schools, and teachers. It is developed as an interactive resource, to be built upon over time.

The project was implemented over the course of a year and aims to develop awareness among the young generation about the negative repercussions of political violence.

"This is a pilot project and if it yields positive results among students, more schools can implement it and expand it to other regions. Students can also tell their experience to others,"

says Head of ICTJ's Lebanon Program Carmen Abou Jaoudé. "This oral history project has created a rare and valuable archive which will be put at the disposal of the wider public and will be available for schools to use within their own curricula," she adds.

Speaking on behalf of the teachers who supervised the students' work, Olga Farhat said that the importance of "Badna Naaref" is its focus on the humanitarian aspect of daily life in times of war which relates to all Lebanese from different sects, regions, and political affiliations rather than the political and military aspects.

"The project is an opportunity for today's generation to discover their parents' and relatives' stories from during this period of our modern history," she said. Farhat added that the students had the desire and determination to uncover that era and they had raised many questions, particularly about a unified history book and why that phase of Lebanon's history is overlooked in their history courses.

Film Director Carol Mansour is also working on a documentary about the project and excerpts of it were played during the event. This documentary will be disseminated in schools to be used as an educational tool.

This pilot project comes as part of "Lebanon's unaddressed legacy: the missing and the families' right to know," an initiative funded by the European Union and the Embassy of Switzerland in Lebanon.

Photo: Memories left from the war in Lebanon. Photo courtesy of [craigfinlay](#). January 2009.