

young cities

Empowering Youth.
Strengthening Communities.



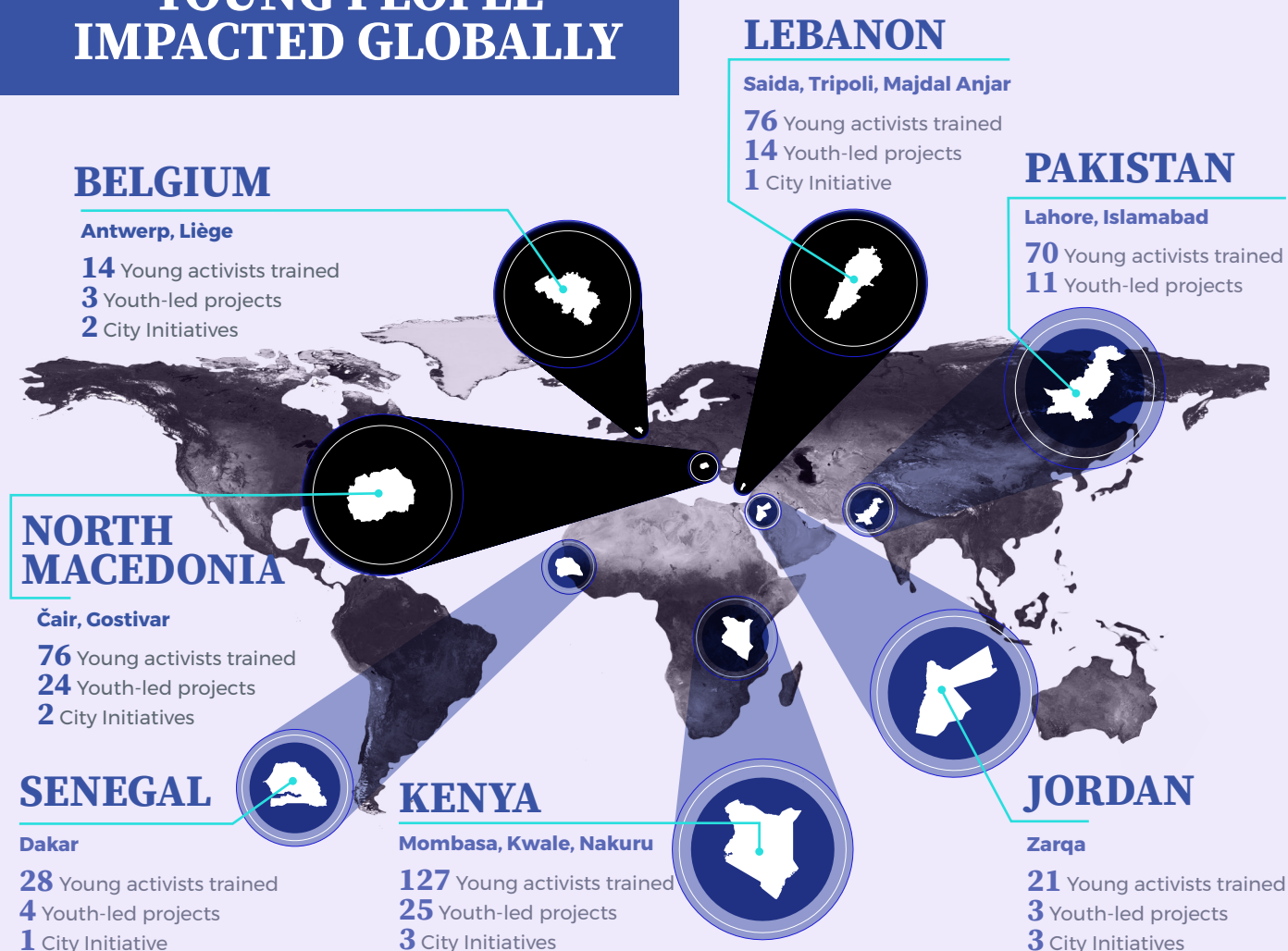
young
cities

Young Cities is a global, pioneering capacity-building programme that connects young people to local governments, enabling the development of shared solutions to the challenges of hate, polarisation, and extremism around the world. Our work builds mutual trust and creates opportunities to address the most pressing issues facing the communities in which we work.

The project is the youth pillar of the **Strong Cities Network (SCN)**, building upon the insights and experience of SCN's collaboration with municipalities around the world - connecting sub-national leaders and driving impactful, locally-led policy.

With the support of our funders as well as our partners, including local organisations and municipal officials, we have empowered young people in ten cities across Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, North Macedonia and Senegal to thrive as peacebuilders in their communities. Young Cities is currently launching in the cities of Antwerp and Liège with the support of the United States Embassy, Belgium.

14.5 MILLION+
YOUNG PEOPLE
IMPACTED GLOBALLY



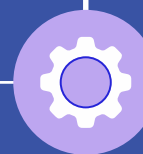
Scoping & Research

Our work is evidence-led. Before launching in a new city, we spend six months scoping to understand the local context and challenges facing different communities. We conduct original research, identify key stakeholders and map existing programmes and policy so we can tailor our delivery to meet real needs.



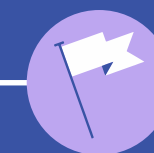
Collaboration & Partnerships

Social challenges require a multi-faceted response. We therefore connect key actors in civil society, municipal governance, and youth activism - creating opportunities to exchange ideas and build trust. We partner with civil society organisations for our own delivery and connect young people with relevant organisations. We also facilitate ongoing collaboration between youth and cities.



Workshops

Youth Innovation Labs combine learning and doing to guide young activists through a process of planning social impact projects and provide an opportunity to transform ideas into actionable plans. Simultaneously, our city workshops help build best practice at the municipal level.



Youth-Led Projects

Youth groups can apply for up to £5,000 in funding - with ongoing training and support - to deliver their projects to their community. By enabling young people to lead their own projects, we are offering them the chance to gain experience and deepen their understanding of project management. It also harnesses youth insight, contributing original projects that have real impact and fostering meaningful cooperation between youth and other stakeholders.



City Initiatives

City Grants support new municipal initiatives to engage with young people in their city. Young Cities offers funding and ongoing support to help our city partners conduct research and deliver activities that enhance their youth engagement strategies and policy. The programme gives them the opportunity to engage with youth directly to enhance youth inclusion and build trust.



Sustainability

We provide our young activists ongoing support year-on-year with additional funding (**Ambassador Grants**), peer mentoring, networking, and opportunities for local and international representation. **Showcase Events** help to demonstrate the impact young people and municipalities have had, while **City Exchanges** enable the sharing of best practice.



The Importance of Youth in Preventing and Countering Hate and Extremism

Preventing and countering hate and extremism is a whole-of-community challenge. Solving it requires cooperation between policymakers and an independent and active civil society. Meaningful efforts are needed to empower and include the communities that are most affected to both lead and support localised responses. Young people are a fundamental part of this.

Young people are acutely affected by the challenges of hate, polarisation and extremism. Without adequate support, they can find themselves as victims or perpetrators; and as the future of their communities, they naturally have a compelling stake in its prosperity. They are also in a unique position to support peaceful resolutions. They are passionate, committed and in-tune with local grievances and conflict dynamics. With the right support, they can provide fresh perspectives on local challenges and act as authentic, credible messengers to others in their communities.

Young Cities places young people at the heart of local approaches to countering hate and extremism. We give them the chance to drive change by offering a space where they can define their priorities and explore new approaches, while providing the support and guidance to help them reach their goals and grow as leaders in their communities. We also connect them with policymakers and civil society to help embed youth inclusion in the design and delivery of local policies and programmes.

In Numbers



Youth Innovation Labs Held: **21**



Young Peacebuilders Trained: **418**



City Officials Trained: **97**



Youth-Led Projects Launched: **90**



City Initiatives Supported: **9**



Small Grants Awarded:

£311,574



Young People Directly Impacted:

22,213



Young People Reached Digitally:

14,508,535



Shared Challenges, Shared Solutions

Young Cities takes a **whole-of-community approach**. Young people from different backgrounds – activists, aspiring civic leaders, entrepreneurs, researchers, artists and creatives – are connected to local government and civil society to jointly pursue solutions. Empowering communities in this way, strengthens the resilience of a city against hate, polarisation and extremism.



Youth-City Cooperation

Young Cities enhances collaboration between independent young peacebuilders and city officials to capitalise on the strengths of each while developing sustained working relationships. Through the programme, city officials help support the youth-led projects and develop collaborative city grants that embed new pathways for youth involvement, while young people engage policymakers in closed round tables and public events to refine policy and youth-focused programming. Together, they exchange perspectives, working toward a shared understanding and shared solutions.



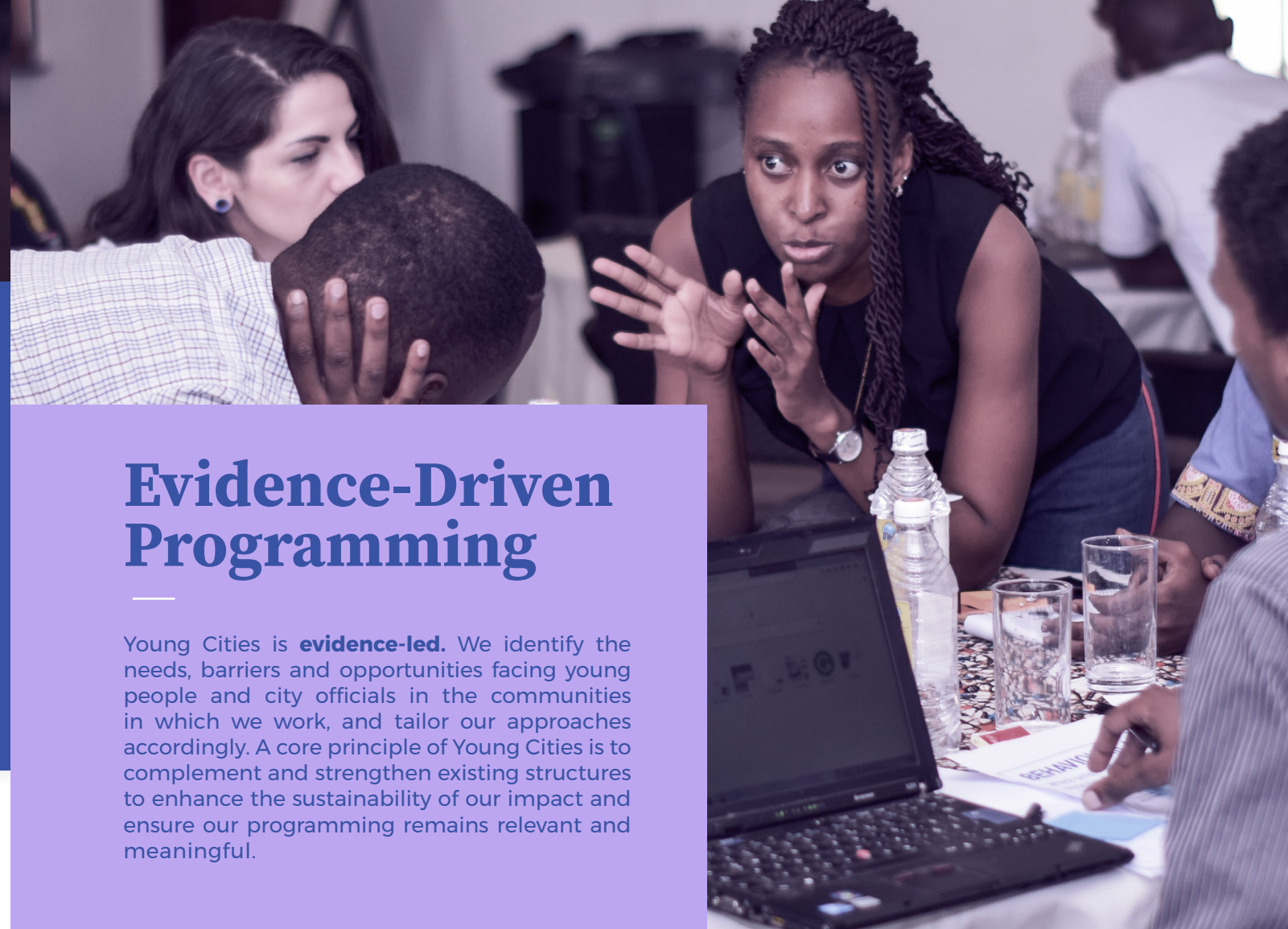
City-City Cooperation

Across geographies and contexts, many cities face similar challenges. Our City Exchanges establish channels of communication between youth and policy makers from different cities to share their experiences and establish good practice. These cross-learning events forge strong relationships between stakeholders in different communities and offer a platform to gather and share insights and inspiration.



Whole-of-Community

Young Cities tailors its approaches to meet the unique needs of each community. We design our programmes based on research with youth and conversations with civil society and city officials; develop solutions collaboratively with police and social workers at the local level; create spaces for community dialogue; and support community-driven solutions which tackle challenges that matter.



Evidence-Driven Programming

Young Cities is **evidence-led**. We identify the needs, barriers and opportunities facing young people and city officials in the communities in which we work, and tailor our approaches accordingly. A core principle of Young Cities is to complement and strengthen existing structures to enhance the sustainability of our impact and ensure our programming remains relevant and meaningful.

Scoping & Research

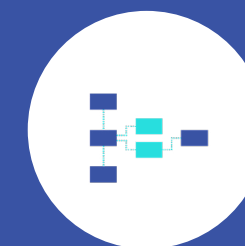
In each city, Young Cities conducts in-depth **scoping**. In addition to desk-based research and mapping, we interview local CSOs; organise focus groups with youth in the community. Including young activists; hold consultations with local and national government and community leaders; and conduct original research, including resilience studies, narrative mapping, and social media analysis to understand how hate and extremism affect youth nationally. This research helps us map existing programmes and resources, identify different groups' priorities and needs, and understand differences in perspectives.



Engaging Youth



Building Local Partnerships



Policy & Practice Mapping



Conducting Research & Analysis



From Ideas

TRAINING & IDEATION

We adopt a holistic approach to building capacity, utilising a **learning-by-doing** method that contextualizes theory in application. This allows participants to engage critically with the material during workshops and then have access to extended **periods of application** – including funding and personalized support. The results are tangible participant-driven outputs that maximize impact beyond the direct implementation of our programme.

to Impact

YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES

Between 2018 and 2022, with ongoing training, mentorship and £311,573.74 in small grants, Young Cities has supported 413 young peacebuilders to create 90 unique initiatives, which have together directly impacted 22,217 young people offline and 14,508,535 more online. This youth-driven model creates a space for young people to implement their ideas, act as credible messengers for peace within their communities and gain valuable experience and exposure. While our training programmes impart valuable knowledge, it is through application that youth really build their capacities as peacebuilders. By dismantling barriers to funding and supporting sustainable initiatives in the medium to long term, we are changing the way young people engage in peacebuilding locally.



OUR TRAINING CURRICULUM: A SNAPSHOT

Setting effective goals and objectives

Using creative mediums and designing campaign outputs

Using social media effectively for social change

Monitoring and evaluation, including measuring and reporting



Analysing a challenge, including research techniques

Understanding target audiences and creating a detailed audience profile

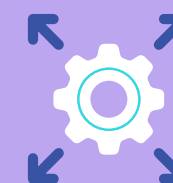
Campaign communications including branding and messaging

Conducting a risk analysis and mitigating risk

Project, budget, and resource management



CREATIVE



CAPACITY-BUILDING



YOUTH-LED



DESIGNED FOR IMPACT



SEED-FUNDING

City Initiatives

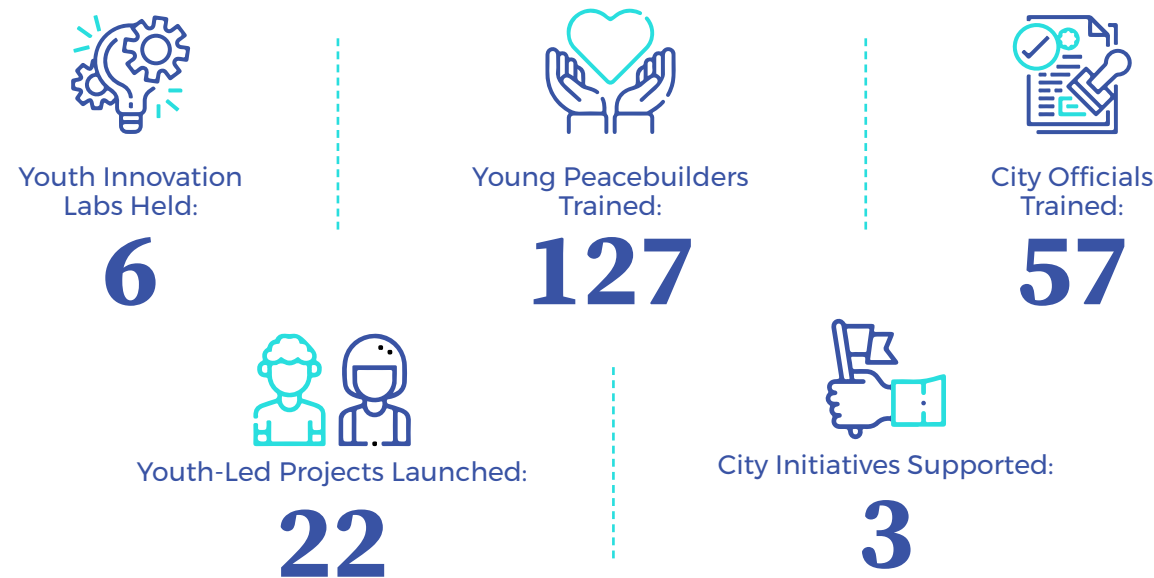
Young Cities also offers local government representatives small grants for initiatives that improve youth-facing policy, build good practice for youth inclusion and engagement, or offer opportunities to build trust between youth and local government. Each initiative involves some element of youth-city cooperation and often combines research with action-oriented outputs. In total, Young Cities has provided over £65,000 to support municipal officials in nine cities to launch ten City Initiatives, conducting research to fill critical gaps, establishing policy dialogue mechanisms, improving access to the arts, and more.



Young Cities in Kenya

Young Cities launched in Kenya in 2018, first in Mombasa County, followed by Kwale and Nakuru. These counties face societal challenges that include extremist recruitment among youth, a lack of civic engagement, and gang- and election-related violence. Between 2018 and 2022, we have trained 127 young peacebuilders and 57 city officials and provided funding of £86,848 and direct follow-up support to launch 22 youth-led initiatives and 3 city grants. Through city exchanges and multi-County Youth Innovation Labs, we have facilitated strong partnerships between Kenyan youth and leaders from three counties and enhanced their collaboration with the National government and local civil society organisations. Our participants in Kenya have gone onto establish their own organisations, directly contributed to local policy changes, and many are now training other Kenyan youth on the skills and knowledge they gained in the process of participating in Young Cities.

In Numbers



NAKURU

Young Cities expanded to the inland county of Nakuru in 2021. There, we have trained 18 young activists to address and mitigate the threat of electoral violence in the county in advance of the August 2022 elections. Providing specialised training and two rounds of funding, Young Cities supported three teams to leverage street theatre, dance, film as well as traditional awareness-raising and capacity-building activities, to produce some truly outstanding initiatives.



KWALE

Since 2019, Young Cities has trained 45 young activists launch eight youth-led projects that have addressed intergenerational trauma, improved young people's civic engagement in County's devolution process, and raised awareness of gang violence, among others. Young Cities collaborated closely with Kwale County government and its Forum on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism to further improve youth participation in political processes.

MOMBASA

Young Cities launched in Mombasa in 2018. Since then, our programming has supported 77 young activists to launch 14 youth-led projects that tackled gang violence, improved youth-participation in local governance and built trust between young people and the police. Young Cities also worked closely with Mombasa County government to integrate the voices of 756 youth into the County's new youth resilience strategy by consulting them across eight public participation forums.

Partners



MOMBASA COUNTY



KWALE COUNTY



NAKURU COUNTY



HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA



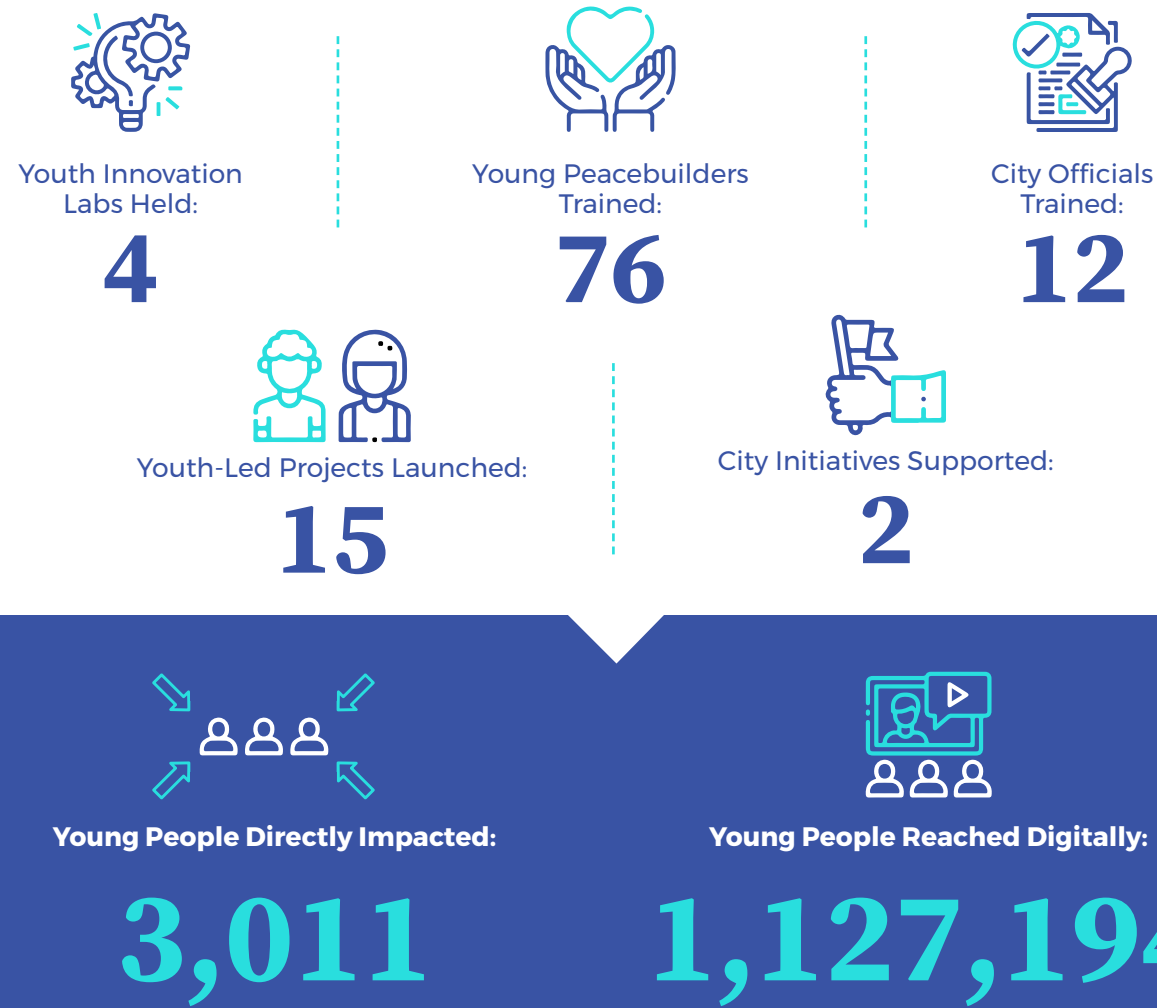
YOUTH BILA NOMA



Young Cities in North Macedonia

The SCN began working in three municipalities in North Macedonia in 2017. In 2020, Young Cities built upon their success by leveraging these municipal relationships to enhance collaboration with young people in addressing local challenges that contribute to extremism, hate and polarisation. To date, Young Cities has delivered programmes in Gostivar and Skopje where we provided direct support to 76 young peacebuilders and trained 12 municipal officials to develop sustainable solutions to these challenges. It has resulted in 14 youth-led projects that utilised arts, research, capacity-building, dialogue and more to directly impact 3011 young people and reach 1,127,194 more, as well as two city-led projects that improved municipal-level programming.

In Numbers

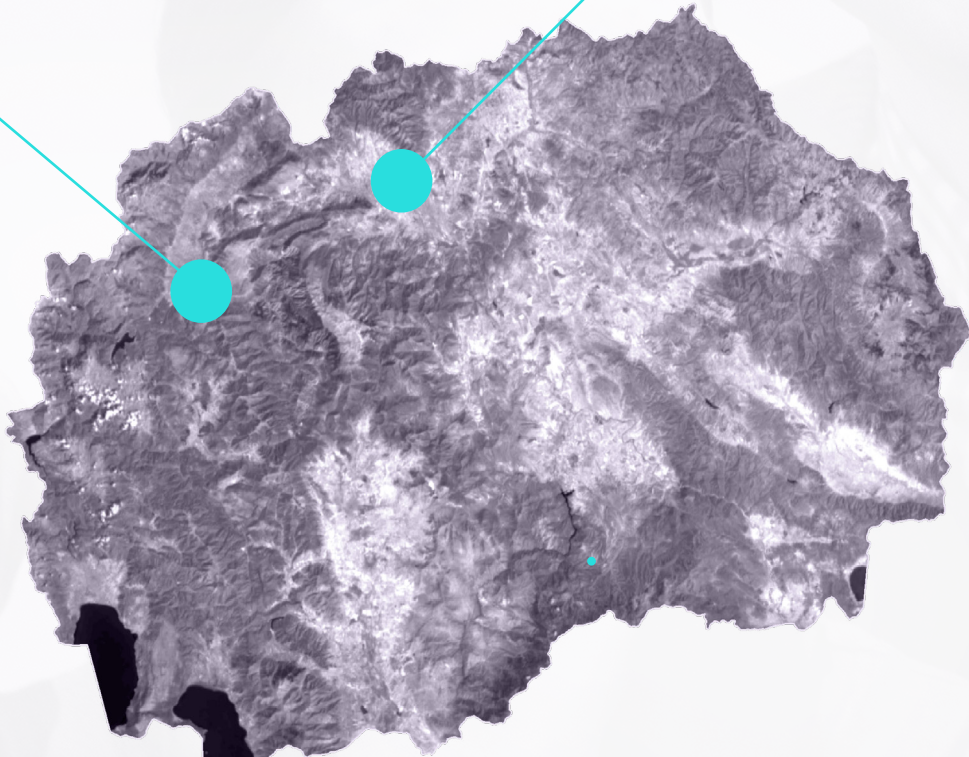


GOSTIVAR

The challenges facing young people in the ethnically diverse city of Gostivar include limited economic and civic opportunities, breakdowns in social cohesion between ethnic groups, high rates of petty crime and corruption, and the normalisation of gender-based discrimination. The 34 youth we trained have launched 13 projects to take on these issues in diverse ways, using plays, workshops, civic action camps, research, art and reclaiming public spaces. The municipal government developed an activity plan for PE teachers in schools to use sports as a way of encouraging social cohesion.

SKOPJE

In 2020, Young Cities launched in the municipality of Čair within the capital city of Skopje, one of the most densely populated and ethnically diverse municipalities in Europe. We expanded the programme to the whole of Skopje in 2021 to tap into all the talents of the country's vibrant capital. In total, we supported the launch of 11 projects, many of which have used creative mediums such as film, photography podcasts and art magazines, to challenge issues of discrimination and violence. Čair's municipal government led a project to develop a curriculum for school-aged children and young people, on digital citizenship for teachers, parents and carers



Partners

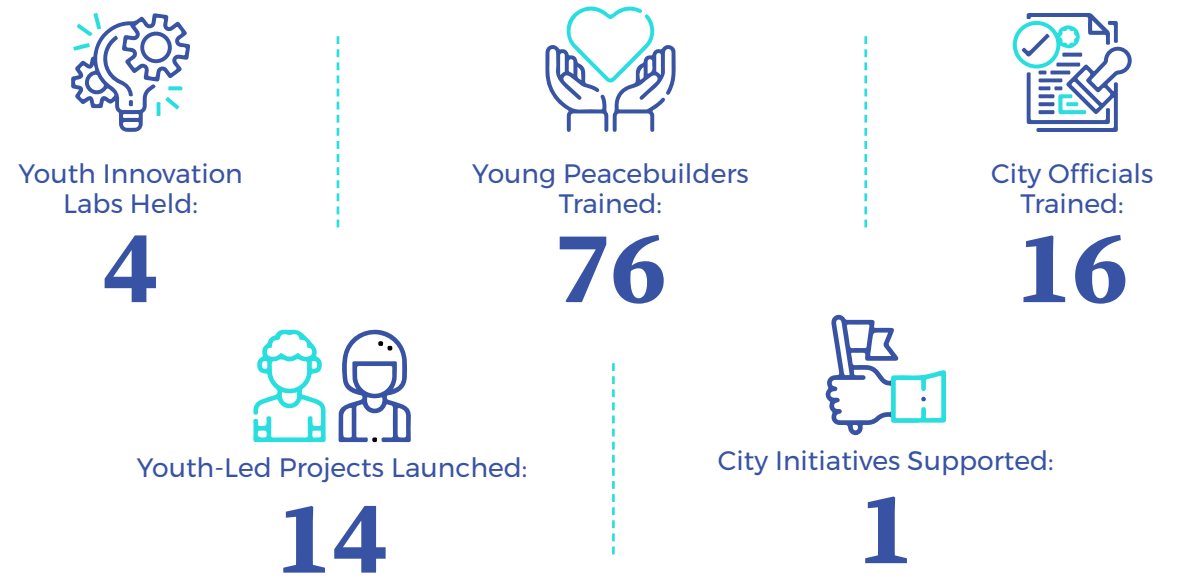




Young Cities in Lebanon

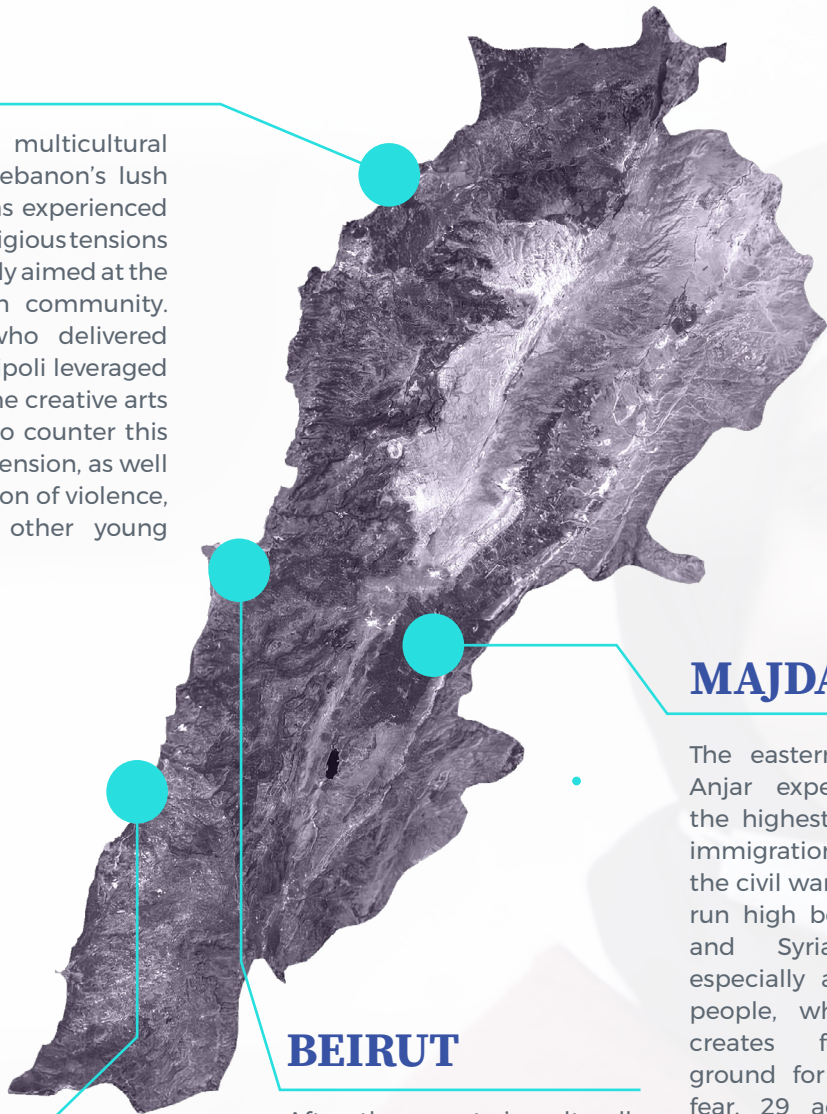
The SCN began working in Lebanon in 2016 and was integral in forming Local Prevention Networks in the cities of Tripoli, Saida and Majdal Anjar to mobilise local responses to hate and extremism. In 2018, Young Cities began building upon this work and in four years supported 76 young people in these cities to launch 14 initiatives. Each of the four Youth Innovation Labs brought groups from all three cities together, enhancing bonds between young peacebuilders across the country. In 2020, following the explosion in Beirut, Young Cities diverted its City Initiative funding to aid in relief efforts, mobilising 52 young people to deliver meals and help clear debris.

In Numbers



TRIPOLI

The diverse and multicultural city located on Lebanon's lush northern coast has experienced its share of interreligious tensions and hate, especially aimed at the minority Christian community. The 33 youth who delivered four projects in Tripoli leveraged youth talents in the creative arts and filmmaking to counter this inter-communal tension, as well as the normalisation of violence, by empowering other young people.



MAJDAL ANJAR

The eastern city of Majdal Anjar experienced one of the highest rates of refugee immigration in the wake of the civil war in Syria. Tensions run high between Lebanese and Syrian populations, especially among its young people, whose segregation creates fertile breeding ground for stereotypes and fear. 29 activists launched six projects that touched on the issues of inter-communal tensions and discrimination, and provided opportunities for youth empowerment.

SAIDA

Saida, also known as Sidon, is home to hundreds of thousands of refugees that arrived from Palestine and Syria since 1948. As such the city's makeup is different from others in the country, and tension exists between the various communities. Most of the 24 young activists we worked with in Saida are refugees themselves, and the four projects we supported sought to reduce tensions between the refugee and Lebanese communities and counter marginalisation and discrimination of refugees.

BEIRUT

After the country's culturally vibrant capital was devastated by the blast that took place in August 2020, Young Cities and the SCN diverted funding and resources to reconstruction efforts in the city, renovating houses, training youth clean-up volunteers and distributing thousands of meals.

Partners



SAIDA CITY GOVERNMENT



MAJDAL ANJAR CITY GOVERNMENT



TRIPOLI



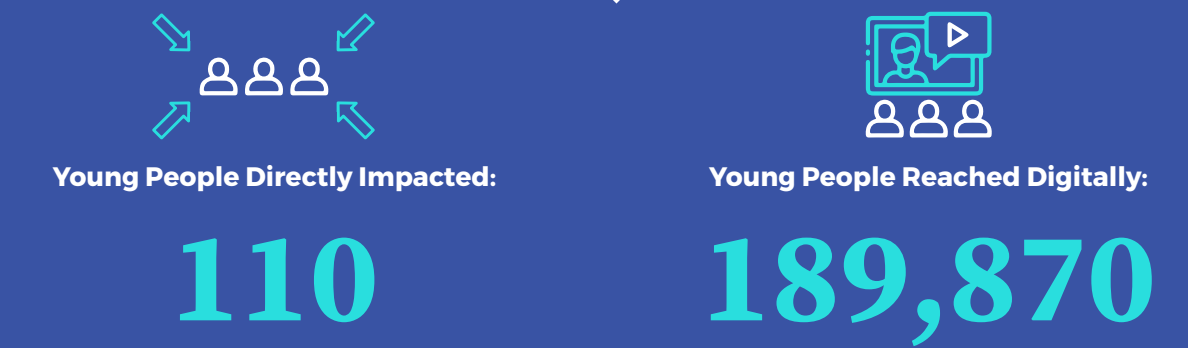
INITIATE



Young Cities in Jordan

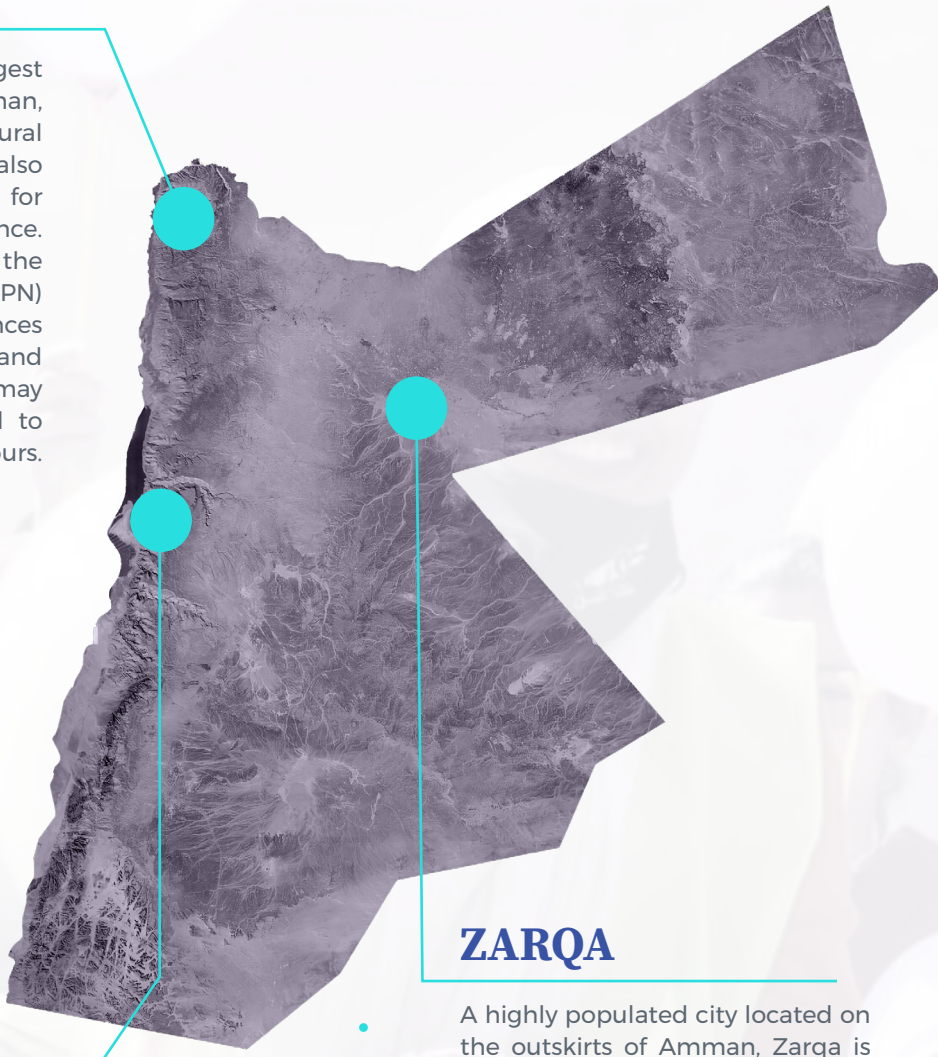
The SCN began working in Jordan in 2016 and was integral in forming Local Prevention Networks (LPN). Young Cities followed on this great work in 2021, supporting 21 young peacebuilders in Zarqa to launch three initiatives. Two have gone to receive a second round of funding, taking different approaches to tackle disinformation and discrimination. Simultaneously, Young Cities supported three City Initiatives with municipal officials in: Zarqa to provide youth with the skills and confidence to approach the labour market with a career day; in Irbid to conduct research to understand how religious doctrine is being used to perpetuate violence; and in Karak to use theatre as a medium to foster better social cohesion and encourage cultural acceptance.

In Numbers



IRBID

The country's second largest populated city after Amman, Irbid is considered the cultural capital of Jordan, it is also notorious as a flashpoint for religious and nationalist violence. Through a City Initiative, the Local Prevention Network (LPN) researched youth grievances and endeavoured to understand how religious scriptures may be misinterpreted and used to perpetuate violent behaviours.



ZARQA

A highly populated city located on the outskirts of Amman, Zarqa is a multicultural and vibrant place. However, the city's high rate of unemployment has left many young people in Zarqa feeling despondent and disengaged. In addition to supporting three youth-led initiatives, Young Cities worked alongside the municipality to launch a City Initiative which empowered young people in seeking and securing employment.

KARAK

Nearly a quarter of Karak's population are Christian, making it the highest proportion per capita in any of Jordan's main cities. With Young Cities support, the city's LPN and municipality implemented a City Initiative to foster greater social cohesion and cultural acceptance between the religious communities that call the city home. The project included a theatre performance coordinated by the LPN's youth wing, which created a welcoming space for people from any culture, religion and background.

Partners





Young Cities in Pakistan

Since 2019, Young Cities has been working in Islamabad and Lahore through its Youth Civil Activism Network (YouthCAN) initiative. We have trained 70 young people to develop 11 youth-led projects that address the issues of religious intolerance, anti-minority discrimination, gender-based violence, COVID-related disinformation and more.

Our approach to capacity building in the country has evolved over the years, shifting from delivering our trainings in-person to delivering remote programmes to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, settling on a hybrid model that combined good practice from our online and offline models. Beginning in 2023, we will pilot a new hybrid training programme for young activists in Karachi and Lahore. It will combine eLearning with in-person training to address hate and extremism and forge relationships between young peacebuilders in both cities.

In Numbers



Youth Innovation Labs Held:

3



Young Peacebuilders Trained:

70



Youth-Led Projects Launched:

11



Young People Directly Impacted:

728

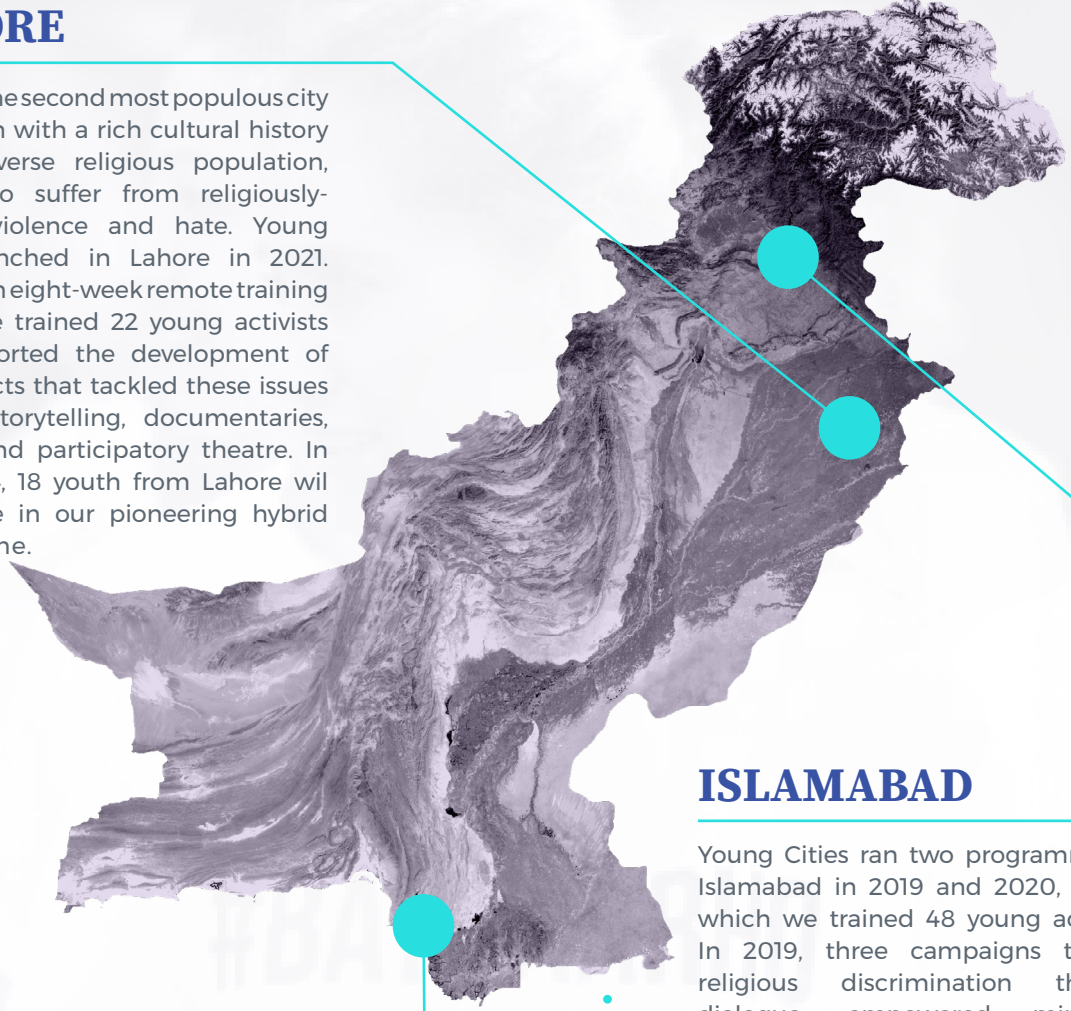


Young People Reached Digitally:

9,692,889

LAHORE

Lahore is the second most populous city in Pakistan with a rich cultural history and a diverse religious population, many who suffer from religiously-inspired violence and hate. Young Cities launched in Lahore in 2021. Through an eight-week remote training course, we trained 22 young activists and supported the development of four projects that tackled these issues through storytelling, documentaries, football and participatory theatre. In 2023-2024, 18 youth from Lahore will participate in our pioneering hybrid programme.



ISLAMABAD

Young Cities ran two programmes in Islamabad in 2019 and 2020, during which we trained 48 young activists. In 2019, three campaigns tackled religious discrimination through dialogue, empowered minorities through civic education, and addressed misinformation using cricket. In 2020, adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic, we delivered our programme online, supporting four teams to develop a collaborative social media campaign to tackle COVID-related mis- and disinformation.

KARACHI

Young Cities will be expanding to the youthful and vibrant city of Karachi in 2023, where we will train 18 youth through a pioneering hybrid programme.

Partners



HIVE PAKISTAN

Young Cities in Senegal

DAKAR

Working closely with the Ville de Dakar municipal government, Young Cities trained 28 young people to launch four projects that used a variety of creative media to address pressing youth issues through concerts to counter cultures of gender based violence, live streams to tackle online harassment and violence, films that raised awareness of the stigmatisation of ex-convicts, research to understand better the tensions that exist between young people and police in the city.

Partners



In Numbers



Young People Directly Impacted:

228

Young People Reached Digitally:

101,103

Young Cities in Australia

MELBOURNE

Due to the challenges to in-person delivery that COVID-19 presented, in 2021 Young Cities adapted its capacity-building programming to be delivered as an eLearning course. Over four weeks, we trained 18 young activists and students from Victoria University who developed four campaigns that used Instagram Lives that dissected gender-based violence in television, a magazine that promoted gender equity through art, two webinars that spotlighted the challenge of being both a woman and a migrant, and an online expo for employers to make their workplaces more accessible to the differently abled.

Partners



In Numbers



Young People Directly Impacted:

54

Young People Reached Digitally:

1,352,272





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